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THE HERO OF ESTHONIA

VOLUME THE SECOND

THE HERO OF ESTHONIA
AND OTHER STUDIES IN THE
ROMANTIC LITERATURE OF
THAT COUNTRY

COMPILED

FROM ESTHONIAN AND GERMAN SOURCES BY

^{m orsell}
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CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE FINNISH
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WITH A MAP OF ESTHONIA

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

LONDON

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PART II

Esthonian Folk-Tales

(continued)

SECTION III

COSMOPOLITAN STORIES

UNDER this heading we propose to notice a series of tales which are almost the common property of all nations, and the origin of which is lost in remote antiquity. These we have arranged under their most familiar names in alphabetical order.

BLUEBEARD.

(KREUTZWALD.)

THE Esthonian version of "Bluebeard" (the Wife-Murderer) is very similar to the usual story. A

rich lord, reported to have vast treasure-vaults under his castle, lost his wives very fast, and married, as his twelfth wife, the youngest of the three daughters of a reduced gentleman in the neighbourhood. An orphan boy had been brought up in the household, and had served first as gooseherd, and then as page; but he was always known as "Goose-Tony." He was nearly of the same age as the young lady, who had been his playmate, and he declared that the rich suitor was a murderer; his heart told him so, and his presentiments had never yet deceived him. The boy was scolded and threatened, but his warnings made so much impression that he was allowed to accompany the bride to her new home.

Three weeks afterwards, the husband set out on a journey, leaving his keys with his wife, among which was the gold key of the forbidden chamber. He warned her that if she even looked in, he would be forced to behead her with his own hand. She begged him in vain to take charge of it himself; but he refused, and left it with her.

Next morning one of the lady's sisters came to stay with her; but a day or two afterwards the page gave her another warning, after which he

suddenly disappeared, and no trace of him could be found. The two sisters looked over the house, and at last encouraged each other to enter the secret chamber. In the middle stood an oaken block with a broad axe upon it, and the floor was splashed with blood. In the background against the wall stood a table, with the bloody heads of the squire's former wives ranged upon it. The lady dropped the key in her horror, and on picking it up found it covered with blood-stains, which nothing could remove, while the door stood a handbreadth open, as if an invisible wedge had fallen between the door and the door-post.

The squire was not expected to return for a week, but he came back next morning, and rushed upstairs in a frenzied rage, dragged his wife to the block by her hair, and was just lifting the axe, when he was struck down by Goose-Tony with a heavy cudgel, and bound. He was brought to justice, and sentenced to death, and his property was adjudged to his widow, who shortly after married the page who had saved her life.

CINDERELLA.

(KREUTZWALD.)

THE Esthonian story of Tuhka-Triinu (Ash-Katie¹), as given by Kreutzwald, is more on the lines of the German *Aschenputtel* than on those of the French *Cendrillon*.

Once upon a time there lived a rich man with his wife and an only daughter. When the mother dies, she directs her daughter to plant a tree on her grave, where the birds can find food and shelter.² The father marries a widow with two daughters, who ill-treat the motherless girl, declaring that she shall be their slave-girl. A magpie cries from the summit of the tree, "Poor child, poor child! why do you not go and complain to the rowan-tree? Ask for counsel, when your hard life will be lightened."

She goes to the grave at night, and a voice asks

¹ Here Cinderella's real name is Katrina; in Finnish she is sometimes called Kristina (see Miss Cox, *Cinderella*, p. 552), while in Slavonic tales she is called Marya, and in some German adaptations Aennchen.

² When Väinämöinen cleared the forest, he left a birch-tree standing for the same purpose (*Kalevala*, Runo ii.).

her to whom she should appeal, and in whom she should trust, and she answers, "God." Then the voice tells her to call the cock and hen to help her, when she has work to do which she cannot perform by herself.

When the king's ball is announced, Cinderella has to dress her sisters, after which the eldest throws lentils into the ashes, telling her to pick them up; but this is done by the cock and hen. She is left at home weeping, and a voice tells her to go and shake the rowan-tree. When she had done so, a light appeared in the darkness, and she saw a woman sitting on the summit of the tree. She was an ell high, and clothed in golden raiment, and she held a small basket and a gold wand in her hands. She took a hen's egg from her basket, which she turned into a coach; six mice formed the horses, a black beetle¹ formed the coachman, and two speckled butterflies the footmen.

The little witch-maiden then dressed Tuhka Triinu as magnificently as a Saxon lady. She then sent her to the ball, warning her to leave before the cock crows for the third time, as everything will then resume its original shape. On the second

¹ A black dung-beetle (*Geotrupes*) is meant, not a cockroach.

night Tuhka Triinu took to flight, and lost one of her little gold shoes, which the prince found next morning. When it came to be tried on, Tuhka Triinu's sisters, who thought they had small feet, tugged and squeezed without success. But the shoe fitted Tuhka Triinu. Her guardian again robed her magnificently, and she married the prince.¹

THE DRAGON-SLAYER.

WE find this story in a familiar form in that of "The Lucky Rouble" (Kreutzwald). The father of three sons, before his death, gives Peter,² the youngest, a magic silver rouble, which always returns to the pocket of its possessor. Peter afterwards meets a one-eyed old man, who sells him three black dogs, named Run-for-Food, Tear-Down, and Break-Iron. Afterwards, when passing through a forest, he meets a grand coach, in which a princess, who has been chosen by lot to be delivered over to a monster, is being conveyed to her doom. Peter abides the issue, and encounters the

¹ This story is one of those which Löwe has passed over, and it is also omitted by Miss Cox.

² Peeter.

monster, which is described as like a bear, but much bigger than a horse, covered with scales instead of hair, with two crooked horns on the head, two long wings, long boars' tusks, and long legs and claws.¹ With the assistance of the dog Tear-Down, Peter kills the monster, cuts off his horns and tusks, and leaves the princess with the coachman, promising to return in three years. The coachman compels the princess by threats to say that he killed the dragon; but the princess contrives to delay her marriage with the coachman, and on the wedding-day Peter returns, is imprisoned by order of the king, but released by Break-Iron. Then he sends Run-for-Food to the princess, who recognises him, and reveals the secret to her father. The coachman is condemned to death, and Peter produces the horns and claws of the dragon, and marries the princess, when the dogs, whose mission is accomplished, assume the forms of swans, and fly away.

¹ Not a bad description of a conventional dragon. If these stories could be traced back to their original source, we should certainly find them to be founded on traditions of some of the great extinct Saurians. They are too explicit, and too discordant, to be founded only on rumours of the existence of crocodiles.

THE DWARF'S CHRISTENING.

(JANNSEN.)

THIS story takes a very similar form in Esthonia to that familiar to us nearer home. A young lady out walking with her maid encounters a snake, which the maid wishes to destroy, but the lady remonstrates. A few days afterwards, a little man enters her room and asks her to become godmother to his child. She at last consents, and he promises to fetch her at the right time, and informs her that he lives under the kitchen steps in the subterranean kingdom.

Next Thursday evening, the dwarf leads her down a long flight of stairs to a great house with many rooms, all lit up with tapers and full of company. She was invited to take her seat at table, but on looking up, she saw a sharp sword suspended over her head. She wanted to flee, but the master ordered the sword to be removed, and the child's mother told her that her own life lately hung on a hair, for she was the snake whose life she had saved. When the young lady left, the

master filled her apron with earth, but she shook it out, whereupon he raked it up, and pressed it on her again, saying, "Don't despise the least gift from a grateful heart." In the morning, of course, it had turned to gold and silver.

After this, the dwarf often visited the young lady, and at length asked her to pour a jug of milk under the kitchen-stairs every morning. But one day the wicked maid ordered a dishful of boiling milk to be poured down very early. Presently the dwarf came weeping to the young lady, saying that his child had been scalded to death by the hot milk. But he knew who was to blame; let her put what she most valued together, and leave the house at once. She did so, and on looking back, she saw the whole house in flames, and in a few hours nothing remained of it and its inhabitants but a heap of ashes. But the lady took another house, married happily, and lived to see her children's children.

THE ENVIOUS SISTERS.

THE Esthonian version of this story (the last in Galland's original translation of the *Thousand*

and One Nights, and also found in Germany and elsewhere), is peculiarly fantastic as "The Prince who rescued his Brothers" (Kreutzwald). A young king was very ill, and the soothsayers and magicians could not cure him. One of the magicians, however, at length finding that the king's hands and arms were gold-coloured to the elbows, his legs silver-coloured to the knees, and his belly of the colour of blue glass, told him that he would only be cured by marrying a young bride similarly coloured. Such a bride was discovered in the daughter of one of the king's generals, and she was made queen. The queen was confined of six boys at once; but her elder sister was jealous of her, and availed herself of the services of an old witch, who carried the children away by night, and handed them over to the Old Boy, replacing them with puppies. The queen was confined a second and a third time, each time of three princes, who suffered the same fate, but the nurse contrived to hide one of the last three princes. Nevertheless, the king was now so enraged that he ordered the mother and child to be thrown into the sea on an iron bed for a boat. But it floated away with them; and when the prince was seven weeks old, he had

grown to be a young man, and he began to talk to his mother. Soon afterwards they reached an island, when the prince kicked the bed to pieces, and they went ashore. The prince met an old man, who gave him a hatchet which would build houses, and a wand which would change ants into men; whereupon the prince built and populated a city. The prince then changed himself into a flea, and went to his father's palace. The king had married the wicked sister-in-law, and she was trying to persuade him not to visit the island where the queen and prince had settled, but to visit another country, where he would see more wonderful things. He went; but his son had already removed the wonders to his own island, and he returned disappointed. As the king was still bent on visiting the island, the new queen advised him instead to visit a country where he would see eleven men, coloured like himself. When the prince told his mother what he had heard, she knew that they were her sons. Then the queen prepared three cakes, one poisoned, and the others mixed with milk from her breast. The prince set out, gave the poisoned cake to the old devil who guarded his brothers, and divided the other cakes with them. They then

escaped to the prince's island in the form of doves, and presently the king and queen arrived, and the king was informed of the whole plot.

Then the king ordered the wicked queen and the sorceress to be put to death, and settled down in his son's island with his wife and children.

THE GIFTED BROTHERS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

THIS familiar story appears in the form of Swift-foot, Quickhand, and Sharpeye. It begins with the lamentation of a rich but childless wife, who is consoled by a pretty little girl,¹ who suddenly appeared, and directed her to boil three eggs of a black hen for her husband's supper, and then to send him to bed, but to walk in the open air herself before retiring. In due course, three strong boys were born, and the fairy came to see them in their cradles. She took a ball of red thread from her pocket, and tied threads round the ankles of one boy, the wrists of another, and the temples of the third. She directed the mother not to disturb

¹ The word used means a little girl or a doll; Löwe translates it "doll," which seems to be incorrect in this place.

the threads till the children were taken to the christening, and then to burn the threads, collect the ashes in a spoon, and moisten them with milk from her breast; and as soon as the children were brought home from the christening, to give each two drops of the mixture on his tongue. Of course one boy was gifted with great swiftness, and another with great strength and skill in handiwork, and another with great sharpness of sight.

When they grew up, the youths separated to seek their fortunes, agreeing to meet at home in three years' time, and Swiftfoot went eastwards, and entered into the service of a king as groom, and made himself famous in that capacity.

Quickhand, who went southwards, could take up any trade without learning it, and could turn out twenty coats or pairs of shoes in a day, better made than the best tailor or shoemaker. He too made himself famous by supplying a whole army with a full outfit at the shortest notice, when all the workmen in the kingdom were unable to do so by the time required.

The adventures of Sharpeye may be given more in detail.

Sharpeye, the third brother, set out westwards.

He wandered about for a long time from one place to another without meeting with any profitable employment. He could easily earn enough anywhere for his daily expenses as a good shot, but what could he make in this way to bring home? At length he reached a large city, where everybody was talking about a misfortune which had befallen the king thrice already, but which no one was able to comprehend or guard against. The king had a valuable tree in his garden, which bore golden apples, many of which were as large as a great ball of thread, and might have been worth many thousand roubles. It may be imagined that such fruit was not left uncounted, and that guards were stationed around night and day to prevent any attempt at robbery. Nevertheless one of the largest apples, valued at six thousand roubles, had been stolen every night for three nights running. The guards had neither seen the thief nor been able to discover any trace of him. It immediately occurred to Sharpeye that there must be some very strange trick in the affair, which his piercing sight might perhaps enable him to discover. He thought that if the thief did not approach the tree incorporeally and invisibly, he would never be able

to escape his sharp eyes. He therefore asked the king to allow him to visit the garden to make his observations without the knowledge of the guards. On receiving permission, he prepared himself a place of concealment in the summit of a tree not far from the golden apple-tree, where no one could see him, while his sharp eyes could pierce everywhere, and see everything that happened. He took with him a bag of bread and a bottle of milk, so that there would be no need for him to leave his hiding-place. He now kept close watch on the golden apple-tree, and on everything around it. The guards were posted round the tree in three rows, so close that not a mouse could have crept between them unobserved. The thief must have wings, for he could not reach the tree by the ground. But Sharpeye could detect nothing all day which looked like a thief. Towards sunset a little yellow moth fluttered round the tree, and at last settled on a branch which bore a very fine apple. Everybody could understand just as well as Sharpeye that a little moth could not carry a golden apple away from the tree, but as he could see nothing bigger, he kept his eyes fixed upon it. The sun had set long ago, and the last traces

of twilight were fading from the horizon, but the lanterns round the tree gave so much light that he could see everything distinctly. The yellow moth still sat motionless on the branch. It was about midnight when the eyes of the watchman in the tree closed for a moment. How long he dozed, he could not tell, but when his eyes fell next upon the apple-tree, he saw that the yellow moth was no longer sitting on the branch, and was still more startled to discover that the beautiful golden apple on that branch had also disappeared. He could not doubt that a theft had been committed, but if the concealed watchman had related the affair, people would have thought him mad, for even a child might know that a moth could not carry away a golden apple. In the morning there was again a great uproar when it was discovered that another apple was missing without any of the guards having seen a trace of the thief. But Sharpeye went to the king again and said, "It is true that I have seen as little of the thief as your guards; but if there is a skilful magician in or near the town, let me know, and I hope with his aid to catch the thief to-night." As soon as he learned where the magician lived, he

went straight to him. The two men consulted what was best to be done, and at length Sharpeye cried out, "I have hit upon a plan. Can you make a woven net so strong by magic that the thread will hold the most powerful creature fast, and then we can chain up the thief so that he cannot escape again?" The magician said it was possible, and took three large spiders, which he made so strong by sorcery that no creature could escape from their meshes, and put them in a little box, which he gave to Sharpeye, saying, "Place these spiders wherever you like, and point with your finger where they shall spin their net, and they will immediately spin a cage round the prisoner, which only Mana's¹ power can loosen; and I will come to your aid myself, if needful."

Sharpeye hid the box in his bosom, and crept back to his tree to wait the upshot of the affair. He saw the yellow moth fluttering round the apple-tree at the same time as the day before; but it waited much longer before settling on a branch which bore a large golden apple. Sharpeye immediately slid down from his tree, went up to the golden apple-tree, set a ladder against it, and climbed

¹ The God of Death.

up carefully, so as not to scare the moth, and set each of his small weavers on separate branches. One spider was a few spans above the moth, a second to the right, and a third to the left, and then Sharpeye drew lines with his finger backwards and forwards round the moth, which sat motionless with raised wings. At sunset the watcher was back in his hiding-place in the tree, from whence he saw to his joy that his three weavers had woven a net round the moth on all sides, from which it could not hope to escape, if the magician possessed the power which he pretended. The man in the tree did his best to keep awake, but nevertheless his eyes closed all at once. How long he slept he knew not, but he was roused up by a great noise. When he looked round, he saw that the soldiers on guard were running about the apple-tree like ants, and shouting, and in the tree sat an old grey-bearded man with a golden apple in his hand in an iron net. Sharpeye jumped hastily from his tree, but before he reached the apple-tree the king himself arrived. He had sprung from his bed at the shouts of the guards, and hurried to see what unusual event was happening in the garden. There sat the thief in the tree, and could not get away.

"Most noble king," said Sharpeye, "you can now go quietly to rest again, and sleep till to-morrow morning, for the thief cannot now escape us. If he was as strong again as he is, he could not break the magic meshes of his cage." The king thanked him, and ordered the greater part of the soldiers to retire to rest also, leaving only a few on guard under the tree. Sharpeye, who had kept watch for two nights and two days, also went away to sleep.

Next morning the magician went to the king's palace. He was glad when he saw the thief in the cage, and would not let him out till the fellow showed himself in his real form. At last he cut off half his beard under his chin, called for a light and began to singe the hairs.¹ Oh, how the bird in the iron cage suffered now! He shrieked pitifully and beat himself with pain, but the magician went on singeing fresh hairs to make the thief manageable. At last he said, "Confess who you are." The fellow answered, "I am the servant of the sorcerer Piirisilla,² who sent me here to steal." The magician

¹ Combing or cuttings of hair are never burned or allowed to be blown about in the air in Esthonia, but carefully buried; otherwise the owner would suffer from violent headache.

² This word would have no apparent meaning as a proper name;

began again to singe the hairs. "Ow! ow!" shouted the sorcerer; "give me time and I will confess. I am not the servant, but the sorcerer's son." Again they singed his hairs, when the prisoner yelled out, "I'm the sorcerer Piirisilla himself." "Show yourself in your proper form or I'll singe you again," said the mighty magician. Then the little man in the cage began to expand, and grew in a few minutes to the size of an ordinary man, who could have carried off a golden apple easily. He was taken down from the tree in the cage, and asked where the stolen apples were hidden. He offered to show the place himself, but Sharpeye begged the king not to let the thief out of the cage, or he would become a moth again, and escape. They were obliged to singe his hair many times before he would give up all the stolen property; and at last, when all the golden apples had been recovered, the thief was burned in the cage, and his ashes scattered to the winds.

There was great rejoicing when the three brothers returned home at the end of the term agreed upon. Shortly afterwards, hearing that the

but Löwe suggests that it might be a corruption of Virgilius, which, though not impossible, seems rather far fetched.

daughter of a rich king in the North was destined as the bride of any one who could perform three wonderful feats, they set out to the court of her father.

The first feat was to watch a swift reindeer cow for a whole day, and bring her back to the stable at night; the second to bolt the palace door in the evening; and the third was to shoot an arrow straight through the middle of an apple, which a man, standing on the top of a high hill, held in his mouth by the stalk.

The three brothers were so much alike that as each could accomplish one of the feats only, they decided to personate the same man, which was not difficult, when they trimmed their beards to exactly the same pattern.

Swiftfoot went first to the king, and the princess peeped at him through the crack of the door, and fell in love with him, wishing she could hobble the reindeer's feet that the handsome man might win her. However, he found that he was easily a match for the reindeer, though she could have run across the world in a single day. In the evening he brought the cow back to her stable, and after supper returned to his brothers.

Next day, Quickhand dressed himself up like his brother, and went to the court, where every one took him for Swiftfoot. The princess again peeped at him, and wished she could drive away the witch from the palace door. This witch was accustomed to change herself into the iron door bar, and if any one climbed a ladder to close it, she would grasp his hand, and set the folding doors swinging backwards and forwards till morning, while the man swung helpless in her grasp. But Quickhand ordered an iron hand to be made,¹ which he heated red hot, and mounting the ladder, held it out to the witch, and shot the bolt at the moment that she grasped it; and the door remained bolted till the king rose in the morning. Quickhand spent that day with the king, and returned to his brothers in the evening.

Next day, Sharpeye went to the palace, and it was arranged that the shooting feat should come off on the following morning; and the princess declared that she would part with all she possessed to ensure his success. The man who held the apple on the mountain looked no bigger than a crow, and fearing for his own safety, did not hold

¹ Compare vol. i. p. 176.

the apple by the stalk, but in his mouth, thinking that the marksman would be more likely to shoot the arrow at a safe distance from him. But Sharpeye struck the apple precisely in the middle, carrying away a bit of flesh from each cheek of the holder with it.

Sharpeye declined the king's proposal to betroth him to his daughter immediately, and he returned to his brothers, when they rejoiced in their success like children, and then cast lots¹ for the princess.² The lot fell to Sharpeye, who married the princess, while his two brothers returned home, when they bought large estates and lived like princes.

The brothers are once spoken of as "Swedes," for what reason does not appear. Another story on similar lines is that of the Swift-footed Princess (Kreutzwald); but here the various feats, including the race against the princess, who will not marry

¹ Their good faith and absence of envy is as conspicuous as in the case of the sons of Kalev (vol. i. p. 58).

² When the five Pandavas, the heroes of the *Maha-Bharata*, were returning victorious from an expedition during which Arjuna had won the princess Draupadi in a contest with the bow, their mother, hearing them coming, but not knowing what had happened, cried out, "Share equally what you have brought." Upon which it was arranged that she should become the joint wife of the five brother princes.

unless she is worsted in a foot-race, are performed by the gifted servants in the train of the prince who seeks her in marriage.

THE IDIOT'S LUCK.

WE find this form of the story of the despised younger son in the "Strange Tale of an Ox" (Kreutzwald). A dying father leaves an ox to his third son, a simpleton, who goes to sell it, and when passing through a wood he hears a noise in a tree, and thinks it is an offer to buy the ox; so he ties it to the tree, and takes a log home with him as security for the money. Not receiving it when he expected, he breaks open the log, and finds a jar of money inside. He afterwards kills a shepherd who tries to cheat him out of it; and it is given out that the shepherd has been carried away by the devil.

THE MAGICIAN'S HEIRS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

THE story of the traveller who appropriates the magical properties over which the sons of a dead

magician are quarrelling is widely distributed, and frequently occurs as a mere incident in a story; as, for example, in that of Hasan of El Basrah in the *Thousand and One Nights*. In the Esthonian story of the "Dwarf's¹ Quarrel," the articles form the leading *motif*, but mixed up with details curiously resembling some Celtic fairy tales.

A man passing through a wood came upon a small clearing, where he found three dwarfs beating, pushing, kicking, and biting each other, and tearing each other's hair so that it was shocking to see them. They proved to be fighting over an old hat, composed of the parings of finger-nails,² the wearer of which could see everything taking place in the world, whether near or far; a pair of bast shoes, which would carry the wearer anywhere at a step; and a stick which would demolish everything before it. Each of the dwarfs wanted to take all these articles, to go to a great wedding which was just taking place in Courland. The referee put on the hat, saw the wedding, and told the dwarfs to stand with their backs to him, when he demolished them

¹ The Esthonian term is peculiar. "Ox-knee people"—*i.e.*, people as tall as an ox's knee.

² Compare the *Kalevipoeg*, Cantos 13 and 14.

with the stick, only three drops of water being left where they had been standing. Then he went to the wedding in Courland, where he found a great number of people assembled, both high and low, for the entertainer was a very rich householder.

As the wearer of the magic hat could see everything hidden as well as obvious, he saw when he lifted his eyes to the crossbeams¹ that there were a vast crowd of little guests both there and on the door-posts, who seemed to be far more numerous than the invited guests. But no one else could see the little people. Presently some of them began to whisper, "Look there; our old uncle's come to the feast too." "No," answered others, "it seems that this stranger has our uncle's hat, shoes, and stick, but uncle himself isn't here." Meantime, covered dishes were brought in for the feast. Then the stranger saw what nobody else could perceive, that the good food was abstracted from the dishes with wonderful quickness, and worse put in its place. It went just the same with the jugs and bottles. Then the stranger asked for the master of the house, greeted him politely, and said, "Don't be offended that I have come to the feast as an uninvited stran-

¹ Compare Croker's Irish story of "Master and Man."

ger." "You are welcome," returned the host. "We have plenty to eat and drink, so that we are not inconvenienced by a few uninvited guests." The stranger rejoined, "I can well believe that one or two uninvited guests would make no difference, but if the uninvited guests are far more numerous than those who are invited, the richest host may run short." "I don't understand you," said the host. The stranger gave him the hat, saying, "Put my hat on, and raise your eyes to the crossbeams, and then you'll see them." The host did so, and when he saw the tricks that the little guests were playing with the feast, he turned as pale as death, and cried out with a trembling voice, "Ah! my friend, my heart never dreamed of such guests; and now I've taken off your hat, they've all vanished. How can I ever get rid of them?" The owner of the hat returned, "I will soon rid you of these little guests, if you will ask the invited guests to step out for a short time, closing the doors and windows carefully, and taking care that no chink or crack in the wall remains unstopped." Although the founder of the feast did not quite understand what he meant, he consented to the stranger's offer, and asked him to get rid of the little nuisances.

In a short time the room was cleared of all the invited guests, the doors, windows, and other openings were carefully closed, and the stranger was left alone with the little guests. Then he began to swing his cudgel towards the crossbeams and corners of the room so vigorously that it was a pleasure to behold. In a few moments the whole mob of little guests was annihilated, and as many drops of water were left on the floor as if it had been raining heavily. Only one auger-hole had been accidentally left unstopped, through which one of the dwarfs slipped out, although the cudgel might still have reached the fugitive. He fled across the enclosure, bellowing, "Oh, oh, what a calamity! Many a time have I been terrified at the arrows of old father Pikne,¹ but they are nothing to this cudgel!"

When the host had convinced himself, by the aid of the magic hat, that the room was cleared of the dwarfs, he invited the guests to re-enter. During the feast the omniscient man read the secret thoughts of the wedding-guests, and learned much which the others did not suspect. The bridegroom thought more of the wealth of his father-in-law than

¹ The Thunder-God.

of his young wife ; and she, who was not altogether faultless, hoped that her husband and her matron's cap would protect her from scandal. It's a great pity that such a hat is no longer to be met with in our times.

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

STORIES of the Man in the Moon are generally common. In Esthonia it is generally the Woman in the Moon, as may be seen in the two beautiful legends of Videvik, and of the Maiden at the Vaskjalla Bridge. The short legend which follows these resembles that in the Prose Edda relative to two children carrying a bucket (Jack and Jill?) who were taken to himself by the Moon. The story of the Moon-Painter might have been inserted here ; but it seemed to come in more appropriately in another place.

We meet with sons and daughters of the Sun and Moon among the Finns and Lapps, as well as among the Esthonians.

VIDEVIK, KOIT, AND ÄMARIK¹

(Twilight, Dawn, and Evening Twilight).

THE Creator had three diligent servants—two fair and lovely maidens, Videvik and Ämarik, and the slender youth Koit. They fulfilled his orders and looked after his affairs. One evening at sunset, Videvik, the eldest, came back from ploughing with her oxen, and led them to the river to drink. But maidens are always accustomed to think first of their own bright faces, and so was it with the charming Videvik. She thought no more of the oxen, but stepped to the water's edge and looked down. And behold, her brown eyes and red cheeks looked back upon her from the surface of the stream, and her heart beat with pleasure. But the Moon, whom the Creator had ordered to take the place of the setting sun to enlighten the world, forgot his duty, and hurried down to the earth to the bed of the stream. Here he stayed with Videvik, mouth to mouth and lip to lip.

¹ This story has been already printed in English, (Jones and Kropf, *Folk-Tales of the Magyars*, pp. 326-328), but I was unwilling to omit it.

But while the Moon thus forgot his duty, his light became extinguished, and thick darkness covered the land as he lay on Videvik's heart. And now a great misfortune happened. The wolf, the wild beast of the forest, who could work mischief when no eye could see him, attacked one of Videvik's oxen and tore him to pieces. The nightingale sang loudly through the dark thicket, "Idle maid, idle maid, long is the night. Black stripes to the yoke, to the yoke! Bring the whip, bring the whip, whip, whip, whip." But Videvik heard nothing. She had forgotten everything but her love.

Early in the morning, when Koit rose from his couch, Videvik awakened at last from her dream of love. When she saw the evil deed that the wolf had wrought, she began to weep bitterly. But the tears of her innocent affliction were not hidden from the Creator. He descended from his heaven to punish the evil-doer and to bring the criminal to justice. He dealt out severe punishment to the wolf, and yoked him high in heaven with the ox, to draw water for ever, driven by the iron rod of the pole-star.¹ But to Videvik he said, "As the Moon has touched thee with the light of his beauty

¹ The constellation of the Great Bear is of course intended.

and has wooed thee, I will forgive thee, and if thou lovest him from thy heart, I will not hinder you, and you shall be wedded. But from thee, Videvik, I look for faithful watch and vigilance that the Moon begins his course at the right time, and that deep darkness falls no more on earth at night, when the evil powers can work mischief at their pleasure. Rule over the night, and take care that a happy peace prevails in its course."

Thus the moon received Videvik as his wife. Her friendly countenance still smiles down upon us, and is reflected in the mirror of the brook, where she first enjoyed the love of her consort.

Then the Creator summoned Koit and Ämarik to his presence, and said, "I will guard against any further negligence respecting the light of the world, lest darkness should again get the upper hand, and I will appoint two watchers under whose care all shall run its course. The Moon and Videvik shall illumine the night with their radiance at the appointed time. Koit and Ämarik, to your watch and ward I intrust the light of day beneath the firmament. Fulfil your duty with diligence. To thy care, my daughter Ämarik, I entrust the sinking sun. Receive him on the horizon, and care-

fully extinguish all the sparks every evening, lest any harm should ensue, and lead him to his setting. Koit, my active son, let it be thy care to receive the sun from the hands of Ämarik when he is ready to begin his course, and to kindle new light, that there may never be any deficiency."

The two servants of the sun did their duty with diligence, so that the sun was never absent from the sky for a day. Then began the long summer nights when Koit and Ämarik join their hands, when their hearts beat and their lips meet in a kiss, while the birds in the woods sing sweet songs each according to his note, when flowers blossom, the trees flourish, and all the world rejoices. At this time the Creator descended from his golden throne to earth to celebrate the festival of Lijon.¹ He found all his works and affairs in good order, and rejoiced in his creation, and said to Koit and Ämarik, "I am well pleased with your management, and desire your lasting happiness. From henceforth be husband and wife."

But the two exclaimed with one voice, "Father, let us enjoy our happiness undisturbed. We are

¹ The dictionary gives no further explanation than "Name of a mythical personage."

content with our lot, and will remain lover and beloved, for thus we enjoy a happiness which is ever young and new."

Then the Creator granted them their desire, and returned to his golden heaven.

The versions given by Boecler and Jannsen differ slightly.

THE MAIDEN AT THE VASKJALA BRIDGE.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ON a beautiful and quiet summer evening many years ago, a pious maiden went to the Vaskjala¹ Bridge to bathe and refresh herself after the heat of the day. The sky was clear, and the song of the nightingale re-echoed from the neighbouring alder thicket. The Moon ascended to his heavenly pavilion, and gazed down with friendly eyes on the wreath of the maiden with the golden hair and rosy cheeks. The maiden's heart was pure and innocent, and modest and clear as the waters of the spring

¹ According to Jannsen, the forest which once surrounded the river Vaskia, which flows through a village of the same name near Revel, was formerly sacred to a goddess named Vaskia.

to its very depths. Suddenly she felt her heart beat faster, and a strange longing seized her, and she could no longer turn her eyes away from the face of the Moon. For because she was so good and pure and innocent, she had won the love of the Moon, who desired to fulfil her secret longings and the wish of her heart. But the pious maiden cherished but one wish in her heart, which she could not venture to express or to ask the Moon to fulfil, for she longed to depart from this world and to dwell for ever beneath the sky with the Moon, but the Moon knew the unexpressed thoughts of her heart.

It was again a lovely evening. The air was calm and peaceful, and again the song of the nightingale resounded through the night. The Moon gazed down once more into the depths at the bottom of the river near the Vaskjala Bridge, but no longer alone as before. The fair face of the maiden gazed down with him into the depths, and has ever since been visible in the Moon. Above in the far sky she lives in joy and contentment, and only desires that other maidens might share her happiness. So on moonlight nights her friendly eyes gaze down on her mortal sisters, and she seeks to invite them

as her guests. But none among them is so pure and modest and innocent as herself, and therefore none is worthy to ascend to her in the Moon. Sometimes this troubles the maiden in the Moon, and she hides her face sorrowfully in a black veil. Yet she does not abandon all hope, but trusts that on some future day one of her earthly sisters may be found sufficiently pious and pure and innocent for the Moon to call her to share this blessed life. So from time to time the Moon-maiden gazes down on the earth with increasing hope and laughing eyes, with her face unveiled, as on the happy evening when she first looked down from heaven on the Vaskjala Bridge. But the best and most intelligent of the daughters of earth fall into error and wander into by-paths, and none among them is pious and innocent enough to become the Moon's companion. This makes the heart of the pious Moon-maiden sorrowful again, and she turns her face from us once more, and hides it under her black veil.

THE WOMAN IN THE MOON.

(JANNSEN.)

ONE Saturday evening a woman went very late to the river to fetch water. The Moon shone brightly in the heavens, and she said to him, "Why do you stand gaping up there? You'd better come and help me carry water. I must work here, and you dawdle about above!"

Suddenly the Moon came down from above, but he seized the woman and took her with him into the sky. There she still stands with her two pails as a warning to everybody not to work too late in the evening on holidays. But the Moon knows no rest, and can never dawdle about, for he must wander from land to land, and everywhere illumine the darkness of night with his light.¹

¹ Compare the *Kalevipoeg*, Canto 1.

POLYPHEMUS.

(JANNSEN.)

IN the Esthonian version the Devil visits a locksmith, who promises to cast him new eyes. When the Devil calls for them, he binds him to a bench on his back, telling him that his name is Myself. He then pours molten tin into his eyes, and the Devil jumps up with the pain, and rushes out with the bench on his back, telling his companions that "Myself" has done it. He dies miserably, and the dog, fox, rat, and wolf bury him under the dung of a white mare. "Since this," adds the narrator, "there has been no devil more." There is a very similar story from Swedish Lappmark, in which the man who outwits and blinds a giant tells him that his own name is "Nobody."¹

RED RIDING-HOOD.

ONE of the most fantastic stories of this series is "The Devil's Visit" (Jannsen: Veckenstedt), which, notwithstanding its subject, has an absurd

¹ Poestion, *Lappländische Märchen*, p. 122. Another Lapp version, almost identical with Homer's, is given by Latham, *Nationalities of Europe*, i. p. 237.

resemblance in some of its details to "Little Red Riding-Hood."

Two men and their wives lived together in a cottage; one couple had three children, the others were childless. One day, both husbands were absent, and the Devil and his son knocked at the door in their semblance, and sat down to supper. But the eldest child said secretly, "Mother, mother, father's got long claws!" The second said, "Mother, mother, he's got a tail too!" And the youngest added, "Mother, mother, he's got iron teeth in his mouth." The woman comforted the children, and while the childless woman went with one of the devils, the mother put the children to bed on the stove, laid juniper twigs in front, and made the sign of the cross over them.

She then gave the Devil the end of her girdle to hold, by which to draw her to him, but she fastened the other end to a log of wood, and climbed on the roof for safety, taking with her a three-pronged fork. As soon as the devils began to devour the supposed women,¹ the elder discovered that he had

¹ It must be said, to the credit of the Esthonian devils, that they only appear occasionally in the light of ogres. In many tales they are harmless, and sometimes amiable.

been deceived ; and his son advised him to devour the children ; but he could not get at them. Then his son advised him to look for the mother ; and he tried to climb on the roof, but the woman struck him back with the fork, and he called to his son for help. The son immediately rushed out of the cottage to get his share of the prey, when a red cock crew, and the Devil cried out, "He's my half-brother," and tried again to get on the roof. Then crowed a white cock, and the Devil cried out, "He's my godfather," and scrambled on the corner of the gable. Then crowed a black cock, when the Devil cried out, "He's my murderer!" and both devils vanished, as if they had sunk into the ground.

SNOWWHITE, THE GLASS MOUNTAIN, AND THE DESPISED YOUNGEST SON.

WE have these tales combined in the story of the "Princess who slept for seven years" (Kreutzwald).

A princess falls into a deep sleep, and is placed by a magician in a glass coffin. A glass mountain is prepared, on which the coffin is fixed. Up the

glass mountain the successful suitor must ride when seven years and seven days have expired, when the princess will awake and give him a ring.

Meanwhile an old peasant dies, leaving his house and property to his two elder sons, and charging them to take care of the third, who is considered rather lazy and stupid, but who has a good heart.¹ He charges his three sons to watch, one each night, by his grave ; but the elder ones excuse themselves, leaving the duty to the youngest son. The eldest brother proposes to turn the youngest out of the house, but is dissuaded by the other, who thinks it would look too bad.

When the king promises his daughter to whoever can climb the glass mountain,² the two elder brothers dress themselves in fine clothes, and set off, leaving the youngest at home, lest he should disgrace them by his shabby appearance. But he receives from his father a bronze horse and bronze armour, and rides a third of the way up the mountain. On the second day he receives a silver steed

¹ There are several very similar stories in Finnish.

² Compare the story of "Princess Helena the Fair" (Ralston's *Russian Folk-Tales*, p. 256).

and silver armour, and rides more than half-way up; and on the third day he receives a golden steed and golden armour, and rides to the summit. Then the lid of the glass case flies open, the maiden raises herself and gives the knight a ring, and he rides down with her to her father.

Next day it is proclaimed that whoever can produce the ring shall marry the princess; and, to the astonishment of the two elder brothers, the youngest claims the prize. The magician explains to the king that the young man is in reality the son of a powerful monarch, but was stolen away in infancy and brought up as a peasant, and the king accepts him as his son-in-law. His indolence was not an inherent defect, but had been imposed upon him by the witch who had stolen him. On Sunday he appeared before the people in his golden armour and mounted on his golden horse, but his reputed brothers died of rage and envy.

THE THREE SISTERS.¹

(JANNSEN.)

THIS is the familiar story of an ill-used younger sister. A countryman was taking game to market, and his two elder daughters asked him to bring them fine clothes, but the youngest asked him to bring her anything he got gratis. A shopkeeper offered him a kitten, which he brought to the youngest girl, who treated it kindly. On the two following Sundays, the elder sisters went to church to show off their fine clothes, leaving the younger one at home. She went into the garden, and a pied magpie settled on the fence, which the cat pursued, and on the first Sunday it dropped a gold brooch, and on the second two gold rings.

As the third Sunday was wet, the two elder sisters stayed at home, but sent the youngest to church; so she adorned herself with her finery and set out, and at church she attracted general attention. When her sisters heard of it, they insisted

¹ The commencement of this story reminds us of "Beauty and the Beast;" the second part is that of the "Magic Flute."

on knowing her secret ; and they carried the kitten into the garden several times, to no purpose, for as they had always ill-treated it before, it only bit and scratched them. At last they killed it, and threw it among the rushes by the side of the lake.

When the youngest sister missed the kitten, she went out weeping into the wood. Her sisters followed her, murdered her, and buried her under a heap of sand, covering the grave with reeds, and when they went home they told their father that she had been carried away by gipsies. A shepherd, passing that way made himself a flute, and it sang the maiden's sorrowful end. When this reached the ears of the prince, he ordered the body to be exhumed and carried to his castle, and by direction of the flute, it was reanimated with water from the healing well in the prince's courtyard. The maiden immediately begged the life of her sisters, who were released. Her hand was then sought for in marriage by a young nobleman, whom she accepted. After this, she begged the prince to restore her kitten to life too with the healing water, and the two sisters were sent to fetch it ; but the reed-bed by the lake gave way under their feet, and they both perished miserably ; for neither they nor the kitten were ever

seen again. But the descendants of the youngest sister still bear a cat on their escutcheon.

THE THREE WISHES.

THIS well-known story appears in one of its commonest forms in the tale of "Loppi and Lappi" (Kreutzwald), a quarrelsome couple who are granted three wishes by a fairy. At supper-time the wife wishes for a sausage, which is wished on and off her nose, and the couple remain as poor as before.

THE WITCH-BRIDE.

VERSIONS of this story are common in Finland as well as in Esthonia. One of the latter is "Rõugutaja's Daughter" (Kreutzwald). Old Rõugutaja¹ lived with his wife and daughter in a wood. The daughter had a beautiful face, but it was reported that her skin was of bark, and she could find no suitors. At last the mother contrived to inveigle a youth into marrying her daughter by means of a love-philtre, but on the first night he ran away, and shortly afterwards married another bride. On the birth

¹ See vol. i. p. 22.

of a child, the witch-mother transforms the young mother into a wolf, and substitutes her own daughter. The nurse is ordered to take the crying child for a walk ; she meets the wolf ; the deceit is discovered, and the husband inveigles the witch-mother and daughter into the bathhouse, and burns it down.

There is little in this story except the bark-skin of the witch-bride to distinguish it from the numerous variants among other peoples.

Another story belonging to the class of the witch-bride is

THE STEPMOTHER.

¹ (KREUTZWALD.)

HERE the two girls are half-sisters, not step-sisters ; and the younger one is dressed up, and married, veiled, to the suitor of the other. When the husband discovers the deception, he throws the false bride under the ice of a river on the way, and takes his own bride instead. Next year, the mother, on her way to visit her supposed daughter and her child, gathers a water-lily, which tells her that

it is her own daughter. Then the mother and daughter are transformed into a black dog and a black cat, with the aid of a magician; but their attempts at revenge are frustrated by a sorceress, who had previously befriended the young mother.

SECTION IV

FAMILIAR STORIES OF NORTHERN EUROPE

UNDER this heading we include variants of well-known but not cosmopolitan tales, some of which are of considerable interest. Among them is a variant of "Melusina," close in some points, but presenting many features of difference.

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE.

KREUTZWALD'S story of "The Powerful Crayfish and the Insatiable Wife" is almost identical with that of Grimm. At last the woman wishes to be God, and the crayfish sends the foolish couple back to their poverty.

THE MERMAID.

(KREUTZWALD.)

IN the happy days of old, better men lived on earth than now, and the Heavenly Father revealed many wonders to them which are now quite concealed, or but rarely manifested to a child of fortune. It is true that the birds sing and the beasts converse as of old, but unhappily we no longer comprehend their speech, and what they say brings us neither profit nor wisdom.

In old days a fair mermaid dwelt on the shores of the province of Lääne. She often appeared to the people, and my grandfather's father, who was reared in the neighbourhood, sometimes saw her sitting on a rock, but the little fellow did not venture to approach her. The maiden appeared in various forms, sometimes as a foal or a calf, and sometimes under the form of some other animal. In the evening she often came among the children, and let them play with her, until some little boy mounted her back,

¹ Schiefner considers the name of this story (*Nüki Neitsi*) to indicate a Swedish origin; but this seems to be very doubtful evidence, and the incidental allusion to the Swedes in the course of the narrative seems opposed to such an idea.

when she would vanish as suddenly as if she had sunk into the ground.

At that time old people said that in former days the maiden was to be seen on the borders of the sea almost every fine evening in the summer, sitting on a rock, and combing her long fair hair with a golden comb, and she sang such beautiful songs that it melted the hearts of her listeners. But she could not endure the gaze of men, and vanished from their sight or fled into the sea, where she rocked on the waves like a swan. We will now relate the cause of her flying from men, and no longer meeting them with her former confidence.

In old times, long before the invasion of the Swedes, a rich farmer lived on the coast of Lääne with his wife and four sons. They obtained their food more from the sea than from the land, for fishing was a very productive industry in their days. The youngest son was very different from his brothers, even from a child. He avoided the companionship of men, and wandered about on the sea-shore and in the forest. He talked much to himself and to the birds, or to the winds and waves, but when he was in the company of others he hardly opened his mouth, but stood like one dreaming.

When the storms raged over the sea in autumn, and the waves swelled up as high as a house and broke foaming on the beach, the boy could not contain himself in the house, but ran like one possessed, and often half-naked, to the shore. Neither wind nor weather harmed his robust body. He sprang into his boat, seized the oars, and drove like a wild goose over the crest of the raging billows far out to sea, without incurring any harm by his rashness. In the morning, when the storm had spent its fury, he was found sound asleep on the beach. If he was sent anywhere on an errand, to herd cattle in summer, or to do any other easy employment, he gave his parents only trouble. He lay down under the shadow of a bush without minding the animals, and they strayed away or trampled down the meadows and cornfields, and his brothers had often to work for hours before they could find the lost animals. The father often let the boy feel the rod severely enough, but it had no more effect than water poured on the back of a goose. When the boy grew up into a youth, he did not mend his ways. No work prospered in his negligent hands; he hacked and broke the tools, wearied out the draught cattle, and yet never did anything right.

His father sent him to neighbouring farmers to work, hoping that a stranger's whip might improve the sloven, but whoever had the fellow for one week on trial sent him back again on the next. His parents rated him for a sluggard, and his brothers dubbed him "Sleepy Tony." This soon became his nickname with everybody, though he had been christened Jüri.¹ Sleepy Tony brought no one any good, but was only a nuisance to his parents and relatives, so that they would gladly have given a sum of money if anybody would have rid them of the lazy fellow. As nobody would put up with him any longer, his father engaged him as servant to a foreign captain, because he could not run away at sea, and because he had always been so fond of the water from a child. However, after a few weeks, nobody knows how, he escaped from the ship, and again set his lazy feet on his native soil. But he was ashamed to enter his father's house, where he could not expect to meet with a friendly reception, so he wandered about from one place to another, and sought to get his living as he could, without working. He was a strong handsome fellow, and could talk very agreeably if he liked, although he

¹ George.

had never been accustomed to talk much in his father's house. He was now obliged to use his handsome appearance and fine tongue to ingratiate himself with the women and girls.

One fine summer evening after sunset it happened that he was wandering alone on the beach when the clear song of the mermaid reached his ears. Sleepy Tony thought to himself, "She is a woman, at any rate, and won't do me any harm." He did not hesitate to approach nearer, to take a view of the beautiful bird. He climbed the highest hill, and saw the mermaid some distance off, sitting on a rock, combing her hair with a golden comb, and singing a ravishing song. The youth would have wished for more ears to listen to her song, which pierced his heart like a flame, but when he drew nearer he saw that he would have needed just as many eyes to take in the beauty of the maiden. The mermaid must have seen him coming, but she did not fly from him, as she was always wont to do when men approached. Sleepy Tony advanced to within ten paces of her, and then stopped, undecided whether to go nearer. And oh, wonderful! the mermaid rose from the stone and came to meet him with a friendly air. She gave him her hand in

greeting, and said, "I have expected you for many days, for a fateful dream warned me of your arrival. You have neither house nor home among those of your own race. Why should you be dependent upon strangers when your parents refuse to receive you into their house? I have known you from a child, and better than men have known you, for I have often watched over and protected you when your rashness would otherwise have destroyed you. I have often guarded the rocking boat with my hands, when it would otherwise have sunk in the depths. Come with me, and you shall enjoy every happiness which your heart can desire, and you shall want for nothing. I will watch over and protect you as the apple of my eye, so that neither wind nor rain nor frost shall touch you."

Sleepy Tony stood for a time uncertain what to answer, though every word of the maiden was like a flaming arrow in his heart. At last he stammered out an inquiry as to whether her home was very far away. "We can reach it with the speed of the wind, if you have confidence in me," answered the mermaid. Then Sleepy Tony remembered many sayings which he had heard about the mermaid, and his heart failed him, and he asked for three days to

make up his mind. "I will agree to your wish," said the mermaid, "but lest you should again be doubtful, I will put my gold ring on your finger before we part, that you may not forget to return. When we are better acquainted, this pledge may serve as an engagement ring." She then drew off the ring, placed it on the youth's little finger, and vanished as if she had melted into air. Sleepy Tony stood staring with wide-open eyes, and would have supposed it was all a dream, if the sparkling ring on his finger had not been proof to the contrary. But the ring seemed like a strange spirit, which left him no peace or rest anywhere. He wandered aimlessly about the shore all night, and always returned to the rock on which the maiden had been sitting; but the stone was cold and vacant. In the morning he lay down for a short time, but uneasy dreams disturbed his sleep. When he awoke, he felt neither hunger nor thirst, and all his thoughts were directed towards the evening, when he hoped to see the mermaid again. The day waned at last, and evening approached, the wind sank, the birds in the alder-bushes left off singing and tucked their tired heads under their wings, but that evening he saw the mermaid nowhere.

He wept bitter tears of sorrow and trouble, and reflected bitterly on his folly in having hesitated to seize the good fortune offered to him the evening before, when a cleverer fellow would have grasped at it with both hands. But regret and complaint were useless now. The night and the day which followed were equally painful to him, and his trouble weighed upon him so much that he never felt hunger. Towards sunset he sat down with an aching heart on the rock where the mermaid had sat two evenings ago. He began to weep bitterly, and exclaimed, sobbing, "If she does not come back to me, I will live no longer, but either die of hunger on this rock, or cast myself headlong into the waves, and end my miserable life in the depths of the sea."

I know not how long he sat thus on the rock in his distress, but at last he felt a soft warm hand laid upon his forehead. When he looked up, he saw the maiden before him, and she said tenderly, "I have seen your bitter suffering and heard your longing sighs, and could not withdraw myself longer, though the time does not expire till to-morrow night."

"Forgive me, forgive me, dear maiden," stammered Sleepy Tony. "Forgive me; I was a mad

fool not to accept the proffered happiness. The devil only knows what folly came into my head two nights ago. Carry me whither you please. I will oppose you no longer, and would joyfully give up my very life for your sake."

The mermaid answered smiling, "I do not desire your death, but I will take you living as my dear companion." She took the youth by the hand, led him a few paces nearer to the sea, and bound a silk handkerchief over his eyes. Immediately Sleepy Tony felt himself embraced by two strong arms, which raised him up as if in flight, and then plunged headlong into the sea. The moment the cold water touched his body, he lost all consciousness, and knew nothing more of what was happening around him; nor was he afterwards able to tell how long this insensibility lasted.

When he awoke, he was to experience something stranger still.

He found himself lying on soft cushions in a silken bed, which stood in a beautiful chamber, with walls of glass covered on the inside with curtains of red satin, lest the glaring light should wake the sleeper. Some time passed before he could make out whether he was still alive, or whether he was in

some unknown region of the dead. He rocked his limbs to and fro, took the end of his nose between his fingers, and behold, he was quite unchanged. He was dressed in a white shirt, and handsome clothes lay in a chair in front of his bed. After lying in bed for some time, and feeling himself all over to make sure that he was really alive, he got up and dressed himself.

Presently he coughed, when two maids entered, who greeted him as "his lordship," and wished to know what he would like for breakfast. One laid the table, and the other went to prepare the food. In a short time the table was loaded with dishes of pork, sausage, black puddings, and honey, with jugs of beer and mead, just the same as at a grand wedding-feast. Sleepy Tony, who had eaten nothing for several days before, now set to work in earnest, and ate his fill, after which he laid down on the bed to digest it. When he got up again, the waiting-maids came back, and invited his lordship to take a walk in the garden while her ladyship was dressing. He heard himself called "your lordship" so often, that he already began to feel himself such in reality, and forgot his former station.

In the garden he met with beauty and elegance at every step; gold and silver apples glittered among the green leaves, and even the fir and pine cones were of gold, while birds of golden plumage hopped among the twigs and branches. Two maids came from behind a bush, who were commissioned to show his lordship round the garden, and to point out all its beauties. They went farther, and reached the edge of a pond where silver-feathered geese and swans were swimming. A rosy flush as of dawn filled all the sky, but the sun was not visible. The bushes were covered with flowers which exhaled a delicious odour, and bees as large as hornets flew among the flowers. All the flowers and shrubs which our friend beheld here were far more beautiful than he had ever seen before. Presently two elegantly dressed girls appeared, who invited his lordship to meet her ladyship, who was expecting him. But first they threw a blue silken shawl over his shoulders. Who would have recognised the former Sleepy Tony in such a guise?

In a beautiful hall, as large as a church, and built of glass like the bedroom, sat twelve fair maidens on silver chairs.¹ Against the wall behind them was a

¹ Compare the story of the "Twelve Daughters."

daïs on which two golden thrones were placed. On one throne sat the august queen, and the other was unoccupied. When Sleepy Tony crossed the threshold, all the maidens rose from their seats and saluted him respectfully, and did not sit down again until desired to do so. The lady herself remained seated, bent her head to the youth in salutation, and signed with her finger, upon which Sleepy Tony's attendants took him between them, and conducted him to their mistress. The youth advanced with faltering steps, and did not venture to lift his eyes, for he was dazzled with all the unaccustomed splendour and magnificence. He was shown to his place on the golden throne next to the lady, and she said, "This young man is my beloved bridegroom, to whom I have plighted myself, and whom I have accepted as my consort. You must show him every respect, and obey him as you obey me. Whenever I leave the house, you must amuse him and look after him and guard him as the apple of my eye. You will be severely punished if you neglect to carry out my orders exactly."

Sleepy Tony looked round him like one dazed, for he did not know what to make of the adventures of the night, which were more wonderful than

wonder itself. He continually turned the question over in his mind as to whether he was awake or dreaming. The lady noticed his confusion, and rose from her throne, took him by the hand, and led him from one room to another, all of which were untenanted. At last they arrived at the twelfth chamber, which was rather smaller, but handsomer than the others. Here the lady took her crown from her head, cast aside the gold-embroidered mantle, and when Sleepy Tony ventured to raise his eyes, he recognised that it was the mermaid at his side, and no strange lady. Oh, how quickly his courage rose and his hopes revived! He cried out joyfully, "O dear mermaid!"—but the maiden laid her hand on his mouth, and spoke very earnestly, "If you have any regard for your own happiness or for mine, never call me by that name, which has only been given to me in mockery. I am one of the daughters of the Water-Mother. There are many sisters of us, but we all live apart, each in her own place, in the sea, or in lakes and rivers, and we only see each other occasionally by some fortunate chance." She then explained to him that she had hitherto remained unmarried, but now that she was an established ruler, she must assume the dignity

of a royal matron. Sleepy Tony was so bewildered with this unimagined good fortune that he did not know how to express his happiness. His tongue seemed paralysed, and he could not manage to say more than Yes or No. But while he was enjoying a capital dinner and delicious beverages, his tongue was loosened, and he was not only able to talk as well as before, but to indulge in many pleasant jests.

This agreeable life was continued on the next and on the third day, and Sleepy Tony thought he had been exalted to heaven in his living body. But before retiring to rest the mermaid said to him, "To-morrow will be Thursday, and every week I am bound by a vow to fast, and to remain apart from every one. You cannot see me at all on Thursdays until the cock has crowed thrice in the evening. My attendants will sing to you to pass the time away, and will see that you want for nothing."

Next morning Sleepy Tony could not find his consort anywhere. He remembered what she had told him the evening before, that he must pass this and all future Thursdays without her. The waiting-maids exerted themselves to amuse him in every

possible manner ; they sang, played, and performed elegant dances, and then set before him such food and drink that no prince by birthright could have enjoyed better, and the day passed quicker than he had expected. After supper he laid himself to rest, and when the cock had crowed three times, the fair one returned to him. The same thing happened on every following Thursday. He often implored his beloved to allow him to fast with her on Thursdays, but all to no purpose. He troubled his consort again on a Wednesday with this request, and allowed her no rest ; but the mermaid said, with tears in her eyes, "Take my life, if you please ; I would lay it down cheerfully ; but I cannot and dare not yield to your wish to take you with me on my fast-days."

A year or more might have passed in this manner, when doubts arose in the mind of Sleepy Tony, which became always more tormenting, and allowed him no peace. His food became distasteful to him and his sleep refreshed him not. He feared lest the mermaid might have some other lover in secret besides himself, in whose arms she passed every Thursday, while he was obliged to pass his time with the waiting-maids. He had long ago discovered the room in which the mermaid hid herself

on Thursdays, but how did that help him? The door was always locked, and the windows were so closely hung with double curtains on the inside that there was not an opening left as large as a needle's eye through which a sunbeam, much less a human eye, could penetrate. But the more impossible it seemed to penetrate this secret, the more eager grew his longing to get to the very bottom of it. Although he never breathed a word of the weight upon his mind to the mermaid, she could see from his altered manner that all was not as it should be. Again and again she implored him with tears in her eyes not to torment both himself and her with evil thoughts. "I am free from every fault against you," she declared, "and I have no secret love nor any other sin against you on my conscience. But your false suspicion makes us both miserable, and will destroy the peace of our hearts. I would gladly give up every moment of my life to you if you wished it, but I cannot allow you to come near me on my fast-days. It cannot be, for it would put an end to our love and happiness for ever. We are able to live quietly and happily together for six days in the week, and how should the separation of one day be so heavy that you cannot bear it?"

She talked in this sensible way for six days, but when the following Thursday came, and the mermaid did not show herself, Sleepy Tony lost his wits, and behaved as if he was half-mad. He knew no peace, and at last one Thursday he refused to have any one with him. He ordered the waiting-maids to bring him his food and drink, and then to leave him directly, so that he remained alone like a spectre.

This great alteration in his conduct astonished everybody, and when the mermaid heard of the matter, she almost wept her eyes out of her head, though she only gave way to her grief when no one was present. Sleepy Tony hoped that when he was alone he might have a better opportunity of inspecting the secret fasting chamber, and perhaps he might find some crack through which he could spy upon what was going on. The more he tormented himself, the more depressed became the mermaid, and although she still maintained a cheerful countenance, her friendliness no longer came from the heart as before.

Some weeks passed by, and matters remained at a standstill, neither worse nor better, when one Thursday Sleepy Tony found a small space near the window where the curtains had slightly shifted, so

that he could look into the chamber. The secret chamber had no floor, but looked like a great square tank, filled with water many feet deep. Herein swam his much-loved mermaid. From her head to her middle she was a beautiful woman, but from the navel downwards she was wholly a fish, covered with scales and provided with fins. Sometimes she threshed the water with her broad fish's tail and it dashed high up.

The spy shrunk back confounded and made his way home very sorrowfully. What would he not have given to have blotted the sight from his memory! He thought of one thing and another, but could not decide on what to do.

In the evening the cock crowed three times as usual, but the mermaid did not come back to him. He lay awake all night, but the fair one never came. She did not return till morning, when she was clad in black mourning garments and her face was covered with a thin silk handkerchief. Then she said, weeping, "O thou unhappy one! to have brought our happy life to an end by thy folly! Thou seest me to-day for the last time, and must return to thy former condition, and this thou hast brought upon thyself. Farewell, for the last time."

There was a sudden crash and a tremendous noise, as if the floor was giving way beneath his feet, and Sleepy Tony was hurled down stunned, and could not perceive what was happening to himself or about him.

No one knows how long afterwards it may have been when he recovered from his swoon, and found himself on the sea-shore close to the rock on which the fair mermaid had sat when she entered into the bond of friendship with him. Instead of the magnificent robes which he had worn every day in the dwelling of the mermaid, he found himself dressed in his old clothes, which were now much older and more ragged than he could possibly have supposed. Our friend's happy days were over, and no remorse, however bitter, could bring them back.

He walked on till he reached the first houses of his village. They were standing in the same places, but yet looked different. But what appeared to him much more wonderful when he looked round, was that the people were all strangers, and he did not meet a single face which he knew.

The people all looked strangely at him, too, as though he was a monster. Sleepy Tony went on to the farm of his parents, but here too he

encountered only strangers, who knew him not, and whom he did not know. He asked in amazement for his father and brothers, but no one could tell him anything about them. At length an infirm old man came up, leaning on a stick, and said, "Peasant, the farmer whom you ask after has been sleeping in the ground for more than thirty years, and his sons must be dead too. How comes it, my good old man, that you ask after people who have been so long forgotten?" The words "old man" took Sleepy Tony so much aback that he was unable to ask another question. He felt his limbs trembling, turned his back on the strange people, and went out at the gate. The expression "old man" left him no peace; it fell upon him with a crushing weight, and his feet refused him their office.

He hurried to the nearest spring and gazed in the water. The pale sunken cheeks, the hollow eyes, the long grey beard and grey hair, confirmed what he had heard. This worn-out, withered form no longer bore the slightest resemblance to the youth whom the mermaid had chosen as her consort. Now he fully realised his misery for the first time, and knew that the few years that

he appeared to have been absent had comprised the greater part of his life, for he had entered the mermaid's house as a vigorous youth, and had returned as a spectre-like old man. There he had felt nothing of the course of time or of the wasting of his body, and he could not comprehend how the burden of old age had fallen upon him so suddenly, like the passing of a bird's wing. What could he do now, when he was a grey stranger among strangers?

He wandered about on the beach for a few days, from one farm to another, and good people gave him a piece of bread out of charity. He chanced to meet with a friendly young fellow, to whom he related all the adventures of his life, but the same night he disappeared. A few days afterwards the waves cast up his body on the shore. It is not known whether he threw himself into the sea, or was drowned by accident.

After this the behaviour of the mermaid towards mankind entirely changed. She sometimes appears to children only, most often in another form, but she does not permit grown-up people to approach her, but shuns them like fire.

Other stories relative to the Water-Mother, mer-

maids, and other beings of the water will be found in a later section.

HOW THE SEA BECAME SALT.

(JANNSEN.)

THIS is an interesting variant of a story known from Iceland to Finland.

There were two brothers, one rich and one poor. One Christmas the rich brother gave the other a ham, on condition that he should go to Põrgu. On his way, he met an old man who told him that ham was a rarity there, but he must not sell it for money, but only for what was behind the door, which proved to be a wishing-mill. The rich brother bought it for a high price, and set it to grind herrings and milk-soup; but he was soon forced to give his brother another great sum to induce him to take it back, and to save him and his wife, and indeed the whole village, from being overwhelmed by the torrents of herrings and soup. Afterwards it was sold to a sea-captain, who set it to grind salt, and it ground on till the ship sank, and it now lies at the bottom of the sea, grinding salt for ever.*

* It will be remembered that the Sampo, the magic mill in the *Kale-*

The next story, which belongs to the same class as Grimm's "Devil with the Three Golden Hairs," introduces us to the personified Frost, who is here a much less malevolent being than in the *Kalevala*, Runo xxx. It also combines two familiar classes of tales: those in which a man receives gifts which are stolen from him, and which he afterwards recovers by means of another, often a magic cudgel; and those in which a man visiting the house of a giant or devil in his absence is concealed by the old mother in order to listen to the secrets revealed by her son when he comes home.

THE TWO BROTHERS AND THE FROST.

(JANNSEN.)

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, one of whom was rich and the other poor. The rich brother had much cornland and many cattle, but the poor one had only a little corner of a field, in which

vala, ground salt as well as corn and money, and was ultimately broken to pieces and sunk in the sea. The Grötta-Söngur in the Edda of Sæmund is better known; and many other variants might be cited. The story in the text much resembles that of "Silly Nicholas," which I remember reading in one of Chambers's publications many years ago.

he sowed rye. Then came the Frost and destroyed even this poor crop. Nothing was left to the poor brother, so he set out in search of the Frost. When he had gone some distance, he arrived at a small house and went in. He found an old woman sitting there, who asked what he wanted. The man answered, "I had tilled a small field, and the Frost came and took away even the little that I had. So I set out in search of him, to ask why he has done me this mischief." The old woman answered, "The Frosts are my sons, and they destroy everything; but just now they are not at home. If they came home and found you here, they would destroy you likewise. Get up on the stove, and wait there." The man crept up, and just then the Frost came in. "Son," said the old woman, "why did you spoil the field of a poor man who was sufficiently pinched without this?" "Oh," said the Frost, "I was only trying whether my cold would bite." Then said the poor man on the stove, "Only give me so much back that I can just scrape through, or I must soon die of hunger, for I have nothing to break and bite." The Frost said, "We will give him enough to last him all his life." Then he gave him a knapsack, saying, "When you are hungry, you have only to

say, 'Open, sack,' and you will have food and drink in abundance. But when you have had enough, say, 'Sack, shut,' and all will immediately return into the knapsack, and it will shut of itself."

The man thanked him heartily for his gift, and went his way. When he had gone some distance, he said, "Open, sack," and immediately the knapsack opened of itself, and supplied him with food in plenty. When he had had enough, he said, "Sack, shut," and the food sprang into the knapsack, which closed of itself. When he got home, he continued to use it as the Frost directed.

When he and his wife had lived comfortably thus for some time, the rich brother began to covet the knapsack, and wanted to buy it. He gave his poor brother a hundred oxen and cows, and as many horses and sheep. Thus the poor brother became rich, but he was not much better off, for he had to feed the animals. They all gathered round him, and he was now as poor as before. He did not know what to do, except to go back to the Frost and ask for a new sack. The Frost said, "Why were you so thoughtless as to give away such a knapsack? You are now just as poor as before." But at length he gave him a new knapsack, much handsomer than

the first. The poor brother thanked him heartily, and went away joyful, for he thought he had got a knapsack like the first.

When he felt hungry, he said as before, "Open, sack." Immediately the knapsack opened, and two fellows sprang out with thick cudgels in their hands, who beat him as if it was a fine art. The man was so overwhelmed that he could hardly utter the words, "Sack, shut!" Then the two retired and the knapsack shut. The man thought to himself, "Have patience! I'll exchange this with my brother." When he got home, his brother noticed what a fine knapsack he had, and wanted to exchange. The other had no objection, and the exchange was soon effected. Then the rich brother invited all his relatives and the distinguished people of the neighbourhood, for he thought to use the knapsack first to provide a grand feast.

As soon as all these people were assembled, the host cried out, "Open, sack!" Then the knapsack indeed opened, but the men with the cudgels leaped out among the people, and belaboured them so lustily that they all fled in different directions, and some barely escaped with their lives. They all caught it hot, both the host and his guests. When

at length the host cried out in his distress, "Sack, shut!" the men sprang back, and the sack closed. But now the bolder guests themselves gave the host a good beating before they left. After this, things went as badly with the rich brother as with the poor one before. He kept the handsome knapsack, but the men with the cudgels were in it, and if he only thought of opening it, they laid them on his back. But the poor brother had enough for himself and his wife from the first knapsack as long as he lived.

Versions of this story are current throughout Europe; but in general, the magical properties (of which there are usually two or three) are stolen or exchanged by a designing innkeeper, or other person, without the knowledge of the owner.

The next story, that of the Devil being pounded in a sack, is current in various forms throughout Northern Europe.

THE SOLDIER AND THE DEVIL.

(JANNSEN.)

THE Devil encountered a soldier outside the town, and said to him, "Good friend, please help me to get through the town. I can't go alone, though I should be very glad to do so, for the two-eyed dogs¹ would surround me in every street. They attack me as soon as I enter the town."

"I'd be glad to help you," said the soldier, "but one can't do any business without money."

"What do you want then?" said the Devil.

¹ Odd stories are told in many countries about the relations between various animals and the Devil. In Esthonia the wolf and the dog are peculiarly hostile to the Devil. In the East it is the ass, concerning which Lane quotes the following amusing explanation in a note to the story of the "Peacock and Peahen," &c. (*Thousand and One Nights*, notes to Chap. ix. of Lane's translation):—"The last animal that entered with Noah into the ark was the ass, and Iblees (whom God curse!) clung to his tail. The ass had just entered the ark, and began to be agitated, and could not enter further into the ark, whereupon Noah said to him, 'Enter, woe to thee!' But the ass was still agitated, and was unable to advance. So Noah said, 'Enter, though the Devil be with thee!' And the ass entered, and Iblees (whom God curse!) entered with him. And Noah said, 'O enemy of God, who introduced thee into the ark?' He answered, 'Thou; thou saidst unto the ass, "Enter, though the Devil be with thee."' So it is said that this is the reason why the ass when he seeth the Devil brayeth."

"Not a great deal," returned the soldier, "for you've plenty of money. If you'll fill my gauntlet, I shall be quite satisfied."

"I've as much as that in my pocket," said the Devil, and filled the glove to the brim.

The soldier reflected, and said, "I really don't know where to put you. Stop! just creep into my knapsack; you'll be safer there than anywhere."

"That'll do! But your knapsack has three straps. Don't buckle the third, or it might be bad for me."¹

"All right! Squeeze in."

So the Devil crept into the knapsack.

But the soldier was one of those people who don't keep their word as they ought. As soon as the devil was in the knapsack, he buckled all three straps tight, saying, "A soldier mustn't go through the town with loose straps. Do you think that the corporal would excuse me on your account if he saw me so untidy?"

But the soldier had a friend on the other side of the town who was a smith. He marched straight

¹ Jannsen remarks that the *third* strap would form a cross, and that the *three* straps might be an allusion to the Trinity.

off to him with the Devil in his knapsack, and said, "Old friend, please beat my knapsack soft on your anvil. The corporal always scolds me because he says that my knapsack is as hard and angular as a dry bast shoe."

"Pitch it on the anvil," said the smith.

And he hammered away at the knapsack till the wool flew from the hide.

"Won't that do?" asked he after a while.

"No," said the soldier, "harder still."

And again the blows hailed on the knapsack.

"That's enough," said the soldier at last. "I'll come to you again, if it's necessary."

Then he took the knapsack on his shoulder, and went back to the town, where he pitched the Devil out of the knapsack in the middle of the street.

The Devil was crushed as flat as a mushroom. He could hardly stand on his legs. It had never gone so ill with him before; but the soldier had money enough and to spare, and there was some left over for his heirs.

When he died and arrived in the other world, he went to hell and knocked at the door.

The Devil peeped through the door to see who it was, and yelled out, "No, no, you scamp, you're

not wanted here ; you may go wherever you like, but you won't get in here."

So the soldier went to the Old God, and told him how it had fared with him. He replied, "Stay here now ; there's plenty of room for soldiers."

Since that time the Devil has admitted no more soldiers into hell.

SECTION V

STORIES OF THE GODS, AND SPIRITS OF THE ELEMENTS

VANEMUINE appears in the *Kalevala*, under his Finnish name of Väinämöinen, as a culture-hero, though in the first recension of the poem, as well as in most of the creation-myths of the Finns, the creation is ascribed to him, and not to his mother, Ilmatar. He is, however, always a great musician, and in Esthonian tales usually appears rather in the character of a god than of a patriarch.

We read much of Väinämöinen's playing and singing in the *Kalevala*, especially in Runo 46, where he charms all nature by his playing and singing, like Orpheus. In Runo 50 he is described as leaving Finland on account of his authority departing at the coming of Christ; though it is said by an old writer that the favourite deities

of the Finns in his time were Väinämöinen and the Virgin Mary.

THE SONG-GOD'S DEPARTURE.

(JANNSEN.)

ALL living beings gathered round Vanemuine on the Hill of Taara, and each received his language, according to what he could comprehend and retain of the song of the god. The sacred stream Ema had chosen for her language the rustling of his garments, but the trees of the forest chose the rushing of his robes as he descended to the earth. Therefore do we feel the presence of Vanemuine most nearly in the woods and on the banks of the murmuring brooks, and then are we filled with the spirit of his lays. The loudest tones are heard in the wind. Some creatures preferred the deep tones of the god's harp, and others the melody of the strings. The singing birds, especially the nightingale and the lark, deemed the holy songs and melodies of the god to be the most beautiful. But it fared very badly with the fishes. They stretched their heads out of the water to

the eyes, but kept their ears under. So they saw well how Vanemuine moved his lips, and they imitated him, but they remained dumb. Only man could learn all notes and understand everything; therefore his song moves the soul most deeply, and lifts it towards the throne of God. Vanemuine sang of the grandeur of heaven and the beauty of earth, of the banks of the Ema and her beauty, and of the joy and sorrow of the children of men. And his song was so moving that he himself began to weep bitterly, and the tears sank through his sixfold robe and his sevenfold vest. Then he rose again on the wings of the wind, and went to the abode of God to sing and play.

Long did his divine song linger in the mouths of the sons and daughters of Esthonia. When they wandered in the leafy shades of the holy forest, they comprehended the gentle rustling of the trees, and the rippling of the brooks filled them with joyous thoughts. The song of the nightingale melted their hearts, and the whistling of the larks lifted their minds to the abodes of God. Then it seemed to them as if Vanemuine himself wandered through the creation with his harp. And thus he did; and when the bards of the whole country assembled

together to sing, Vanemuine was always among them, though they did not know him, and he ever kindled afresh in their bosoms the true fire of song.

It came to pass, at one of these festivals, that a strange old maid took her place among the singers. Her face was full of wrinkles, her chin trembled, and one foot was supported by crutches. The old woman began her song in a grating voice. She sang of her beautiful youth, the happy days in the house of her parents, and the pitiful ways of the present, when all joy had vanished. Then she sang of her lovers, who came in hosts to woo her, and how she had repulsed them all. She concluded her song with the words—

“ Sulev’s son came here from Southland,
Further Kalev’s son had wandered ;
Sulev’s son would fain have kissed me,
Kalev’s son my hand had taken ;
But I smote the son of Sulev,
And in scorn the son of Kalev,
I the fairest of the maidens.”

Scarcely had the old woman finished her song, when there arose a loud shout of laughter among the people, which sounded far over the plain and was echoed back from the forest. The people sang the

old woman's last words in derision, and their laughter was unceasing till the eldest of the company stopped it with stern interference. All was still around. Then an old man on a decorated seat began a magnificent song, which filled all around with holy joy. But suddenly they heard a voice behind him, which took up the witch's song afresh. Laughter again arose among the ranks of people. Again the elder sternly commanded silence, and those who were gathered round the old man and had heard his song likewise commanded silence. Then the people were quiet once more.

The old man on the throne of song now raised his voice, and the people listened to him with delight. It was a genuine song, for it met with a response in all hearts, and moved their nobler being to heavenly thoughts. But again a loud voice rose in the throng, which took up the ugly chant of the old woman, and again loud laughter echoed through the assembly. Then the old man on the throne grew angry, gazed wrathfully down on the foolish throng, and immediately vanished from their eyes. Only a mighty rushing and clanging was heard, so that all trembled, and their blood froze in their veins. Who was the hoary singer?

Was it not Vanemuine himself? Where had he vanished to? They talked and asked each other. But the singer remained invisible, and no one saw him again.

This was Vanemuine's last farewell to the Esthonian people. Only a few minstrels now enjoy the happiness of listening to his singing and playing in the far distance, and such minstrels only are able to move their brothers with the divine voice of song.

In the *Kalevala*, Väinämönien has neither wife nor child, but the Esthonians ascribe to him a foster-daughter, of whom the following story is related.

JUTTA.

(JANNSEN.)¹

ONCE upon a time the God of Song wandered musing by the banks of Lake Endla, and his harp

¹ This story is also related, more briefly, by Blumberg, who states that Lake Endla lies in an impassable swamp in the district of Vaimastfer, and is visible from the hill near Kardis. The fish and birds are under the protection of Jutta, and there is no place in the country where birds congregate to such an extent, and birds of passage remain so long. Jutta is perhaps the same as Lindu (vol. ii.

clanged in unison with the thoughts which moved his heart. There he saw a little child lying near him in the grass, which stretched out its hands to him. He looked round everywhere for the child's mother, but she was nowhere to be seen. So he lifted up the beautiful little girl, and went to Taara, and begged him to give him the child as his own. Ukko consented, and as he gazed graciously at his daughter, her eyes shone like stars, and her hair glittered like bright gold.

Under the divine protection the child grew up from the tender infant to the maiden Jutta. The God of Song taught her the sweet art of speech, and Ilmarine wrought the girl a veil, wondrously woven of silver threads. He who gazed through her veil saw everything of which the maiden spoke as if it were passing before his eyes. She is said to have dwelt by the Lake of Endla, where she was often seen, planning the flights of the birds of passage, and showing them the way; and also when she

p. 147). Near Heidelberg is a spring called the "Wolfsbrunnen," where a beautiful enchantress named Jutta, the priestess of Hertha, is said to have had an assignation with her lover; but he found she had been killed by a wolf, the messenger of the offended goddess. Whether there is any connection between the German and Esthonian Jutta I do not know.

wandered by the shores of the lake, and wept for the death of Endla,¹ her beloved. But she took the wonderful veil, and gazed upon the happy past, and then was she happy, for she thought she possessed what her eyes saw. She has also lent her veil to mortal men, and then it is that the songs and legends of the past become living to us.

We will now proceed to stories relative to the nature-spirits, commencing with those of the water, who are both numerous and powerful among the Finns and Esthonians. Other stories concerning them will be found in different parts of the book.

THE TWELVE DAUGHTERS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time there lived a poor labourer who had twelve daughters, among whom were two pairs of twins. They were all charming girls, healthy, ruddy, and well made. The parents were very poor, and the neighbours could not understand how

¹ Or Endel, the son of Ilmarine. Blumberg writes "Wane-muinen" and "Ilmarinen" in his account of the legend, which nearly approach the Finnish forms of the names.

they managed to feed and clothe so many children. Every day the children were washed and their hair combed, and they always wore clean clothes, like Saxon children. Some thought that the labourer had a treasure-bringer, who brought him whatever he wanted;¹ others said that he was a sorcerer, and others thought he was a wizard who knew how to discover hidden treasures in the whirlwind. But the real explanation was very different. The labourer's wife had a secret benefactress who fed and washed and combed the children.

When the mother was a girl, she lived in service at a farmhouse, where she dreamed for three nights running that a noble lady came towards her, and desired her to go to the village spring on St. John's Eve. Perhaps she would have forgotten all about the dream; but on St. John's Eve she heard a small voice like the buzzing of a gnat always singing in her ear, "Go to the spring, go to the spring, whence trickle the watery streams of your good fortune!" Although she could not listen to this secret summons without a shudder, yet she fortified her heart at length, and leaving the other maidens,

¹ Compare the story of the "Treasure-Bringer," in a later section of the volume.

who were amusing themselves with the swing and round the fire, she went to the spring. The nearer she came, the more her heart failed her, and she would have turned back if the gnat-like voice had allowed her any rest; but it drove her unwillingly onwards. When she reached the spot, she saw a lady in white robes sitting on a stone by the spring. When the lady perceived the girl's alarm, she advanced a few steps to meet her, and offered her her hand, saying, "Fear nothing, dear child; I will do you no harm. Give good heed to what I tell you, and remember it. In the autumn you will be sought in marriage. Your bridegroom will be as poor as yourself; but do not concern yourself about this, and accept his offered brandy.¹ As you are both good people, I will bring you happiness, and help you to get on; but do not neglect thrift and labour, without which no happiness is lasting. Take this bag, and put it in your pocket; there is nothing in it but a few milk-can pebbles.² When you have given birth to your first child, throw a pebble into the well, and I will come

¹ Brandy is offered by a lover in Esthonia, and accepted by the girl if she favours him.

² Small stones are used for cleaning milk-cans.

to see you. When the child is baptized, I will be the sponsor. Let no one know of our nocturnal meeting. For the present I say farewell." At these words the wonderful stranger vanished from the girl's eyes as suddenly as if she had sunk into the ground. Very likely the girl might have thought that this adventure was a dream too, if the bag in her hand had not testified to its reality: it contained twelve stones.

The prediction was fulfilled, and the girl was married in the autumn to a poor labourer. Next year the young wife gave birth to her first child, and remembering what had happened to her on St. John's Eve, she rose secretly from her bed, and threw a pebble into the well. It splashed into the water, and immediately the friendly white-robed lady stood before her, and said, "I thank you for not forgetting me. Take the child to be baptized on Sunday fortnight, and I will come to church too, and stand sponsor."

When the child was brought into church on the appointed day, an unknown lady entered, who took it on her lap and had it baptized. When this was done, she tied a silver rouble in the child's swaddling clothes, and gave it back to the mother. The same thing happened at the birth of each successive child, until there were twelve. On the birth of the last

child, the lady said to the mother, "Henceforward you will see me no more, though I shall invisibly watch over you and your children daily. The water of the well will benefit the children more than the best food. When the time comes for your daughters to marry, you must give each the rouble which I brought as their godmother's gift. Until then, do not let them dress finely, but let them wear clean dresses and clean linen both on week-days and Sundays."

The children grew and throve so well that it was a delight to see them. There was plenty of bread in the house, though sometimes little else, but both parents and children seemed to be chiefly strengthened by the water of the well. In due time the eldest daughter was married to the son of a prosperous innkeeper. Although she brought him nothing beyond her most needful clothing, yet a bridal chest was made, and her clothes and her godmother's rouble put into it. But when the men lifted the chest into the cart, they found it so heavy that they thought it must be full of stones, for the poor labourer could not have given his daughter anything of value. But great was the young bride's amazement when she opened the chest in her husband's house and found it filled with pieces of linen,

and at the bottom a leathern purse containing a hundred silver roubles. The same thing happened after every fresh marriage, and the daughters were soon all betrothed when it became known that each received such a bridal portion.

One of the sons-in-law was a very avaricious man, and was not satisfied with his wife's bridal portion. He thought that the parents themselves must be possessed of great riches, if they could bestow so much on each daughter. So he went one day to his father-in-law, and began to pester him about his supposed treasure. The labourer told him the exact truth. "I have nothing but my body and soul, and could not give my daughters anything but the chests. I have nothing to do with what each found in her chest. It is the gift of the godmother, who gave each of the children a rouble at her christening, and this has multiplied itself in the chests." The avaricious son-in-law would not believe him, and threatened to denounce the old man as a wizard and wind-sorcerer, who had amassed a large treasure in this manner. But as the labourer had a clear conscience, he did not fear his son-in-law's threats. The latter, however, actually made his complaint to the authorities, and the court sent for the other sons-in-law of

the labourer, and inquired whether each of their brides had received the same portion. The men declared that each had received a chest of linen and a hundred silver roubles. This caused great surprise, for the whole neighbourhood knew that the labourer was a poor man, and had no other treasure but his twelve pretty daughters. The people knew that the daughters had always worn clean white linen from their earliest years, but nobody had seen them wear any other ornaments, neither brooches nor coloured neckerchiefs. The judge now determined to investigate this wonderful affair more closely, and to find out whether the old man was really a sorcerer.

One day the judge left the town, attended by his police. They wished to surround the labourer's house with guards, so that no one could get out and carry away the treasure. The avaricious son-in-law accompanied them as guide. When they reached the wood in which the labourer's house stood, guards were posted on all sides, with strict orders not to allow any one to pass till the matter had been fully investigated. The rest left their horses behind, and followed the footpath to the cottage. The son-in-law warned them to advance slowly and silently, for fear the sorcerer might see them coming

and escape on the wings of the wind. They had already nearly reached the cottage, when they were suddenly dazzled by the wonderful splendour which shone through the trees. As they advanced, a large and splendid palace became visible. It was entirely built of glass, and illuminated by hundreds of tapers, although the sun shone, and the day was perfectly light. Two sentries stood at the door, wholly cased in brazen armour, and holding long drawn swords in their hands. The officials did not know what to make of it, and everything looked more like a dream than reality. Then the door opened, and a young man gaily attired in silken garments, came forth and said, "Our queen has commanded that the chief-justice shall appear before her." Although the judge felt some alarm, he decided to follow the young man into the house.

Who can describe the splendour which he beheld ! In a magnificent hall as large as a church sat a lady enthroned, robed in silk, satin, and gold. Some feet lower sat twelve beautiful princesses on smaller golden seats. They were dressed as magnificently as the queen, except that they wore no golden crowns. On both sides stood numerous attendants, all in bright silken attire and with golden necklaces. When the chief judge came forward bowing, the

queen demanded, "Why have you come out to-day with a host of police, as if you were about to arrest criminals?" The judge was about to answer, but terror stopped his utterance and he could not speak a word. "I know the base lying charges," continued the queen, "for nothing is concealed from my eyes. Let the false accuser enter, but chain him hand and foot, and I will pronounce just sentence. Let the other judges and attendants enter too, that the matter may be done publicly, and that they may bear witness that no one suffers injustice here." One of the servants hastened out to fulfil the order, and after some time the accuser was led in, chained hand and foot, and guarded by six soldiers in armour. The remaining judges and attendants followed. Then the queen addressed the assembly.

"Before I pronounce the well-deserved sentence on the offender, I must briefly explain the real state of the case. I am the most powerful Lady of the Waters, and all the springs of water which rise from the earth are subject to my authority.¹ The eldest son of the King of the Winds was my lover, but as

¹ Jannsen remarks that her authority seems to have been limited to these, and also that she cannot have been the supreme Water-Goddess, whose husband is Ahti, the God of the Sea.

his father would not allow him to take a wife, we were obliged to keep our marriage secret as long as his father lived.¹ As I could not venture to bring up my children at home, I exchanged them with the children of the labourer's wife, as often as she was confined. The labourer's children were reared as foster-children by my aunt, and whenever one of the labourer's daughters was about to marry, another change was effected.

"Each time, on the night before the wedding, I had my daughter carried away, and that of the labourer substituted. The old King of the Winds had been lying ill for a long time, and knew nothing of our proceedings. On the christening-day I gave each child a silver rouble to form the marriage portion in her bridal chest. All the sons-in-law were satisfied with their young wives and with what they brought them, except this avaricious scoundrel whom you see before you in chains, who dared to bring false accusations against his father-in-law, in hopes of enriching himself thereby. The old King of the

¹ These long-lived, but mortal Elemental Powers seem to correspond to some classes of the Arabian Jinn, as for instance, the Diving Jinn in such tales as "Jullanur of the Sea" (*Thousand and One Nights*). They may also be compared with the Elemental Spirits of the Rosicrucians, who are long-lived, but likewise mortal.

Winds died a fortnight ago, and my consort succeeded to the throne. It is no longer necessary for us to conceal our marriage and our children. Here sit my twelve daughters, and their foster-parents, the labourer and his wife, shall dwell with me as my pensioners till their death. But you, worthless scamp, whom I have put in chains, shall also receive your just reward. You shall sit chained in a mountain of gold, so that your greedy eyes shall ever behold the gold without your being able to touch a particle. For seven hundred years you shall endure this torment before death shall have power to bring you rest. This is my decree."

When the queen had finished speaking, a noise was heard like a violent clap of thunder; the earth quaked, and the magistrates and their servants fell down stunned. When they recovered their senses, they found themselves in the wood to which their guide had led them, but on the spot where the palace of glass had stood in all its splendour, clear cold water now gushed forth from a small spring. Nothing more was ever heard of the labourer, his wife, or his avaricious son-in-law. The widow of the latter married another husband in the autumn, and lived happily with him for the rest of her life.

THE FOUR GIFTS OF THE WATER-SPRITE.

(JANNSEN.)

FOUR boys were playing one Sunday on the banks of Lake Peipus, when the water-spirit appeared to them in the form of an old man with long grey hair and beard, and gave each of them a present—a boat, a hammer, a ploughshare, and a little book. As they grew up, one became a smith, another a fisherman, another a farmer, and the last a great king, who conquered the Danes and Swedes.

After this story, of which we have only given a brief abstract, we place another, descriptive of the dwellings of the lake-spirits.

THE LAKE-DWELLERS.¹

(JANNSEN.)

MANY years ago a man was driving over a lake with his little son before the ice was properly

¹ These beings who dwell beneath the sea or lakes are often called "underground people" in Esthonian and Lappish stories.

formed. It broke, and they all sank in the water, when an old man with silver-grey hair came up, and upbraided them for breaking through the winter roof of his palace. He told the man that he must stay with him, but he would give him a grey horse and a sledge with golden runners, that he might drive about under the ice in autumn, and make a noise to warn others that it was unsafe until Father Taara had strengthened it sufficiently. But he would help the boy and the horse above the ice, for they were not to blame. When the water-god had brought them from under the ice, he told the boy to go home, and not to mourn for his father, who would be very happy under the water, and to be careful not to drop anything out of the sledge. On reaching home, he found two lumps of ice in the sledge, and threw them out, but when they struck against a stone and did not break, he discovered that they were lumps of pure silver. He had now plenty to live upon comfortably; but every autumn when the lake was covered with young ice, he went to it, hoping to see or hear something of his father. The ice often cracked and heaved just before his footsteps, as if his father was trying to speak to him, but there was no other sign.

Many years passed by, and the son grew old and grey. One day he went to the lake as usual, and sat down sorrowfully on a stone, just where the river falls into it, and great tears rolled down his cheeks. Suddenly he saw, on raising his eyes, a great door of silver with golden lattice-work close to the mouth of the river. He rose up and went to it, and he had scarcely touched it when it sprang open. He hesitated a moment and then entered, and found himself in a gloomy gallery of bronze. He went some distance, and presently reached a second door like the former, but much higher. Before it stood a dwarf with a broad stone hat on his head and bronze armour. He wore a copper girdle round his waist, and held in his hand a copper halbert about six feet long. "I suppose you have come to see your father?" he said in a friendly manner. "Yes, indeed, my good man," answered the other. "Can you not help me to see him or meet him? I am already an old man myself, and my life grows ever more lonely." "I must not make any promises," said the dwarf, "and it is about time for your father to fulfil his office. Hark, he is just driving off in his golden sledge with the grey horse, to warn mortals against treading incautiously on our delicate

silver roof. But as you have once before been our guest, and have ventured to come again, I will show you the house and grounds of the water-world. None of our people are at home to-day, neither the gentry nor the household, so that we can go through the rooms without interference." As he spoke he touched the door, and the old man and his guide entered a vast and splendid palace of crystal. There they saw a great crowd of men, women, and children walking about, or sitting talking, or amusing themselves; but none of them noticed or addressed the newcomers. Presently the dwarf led the old man farther into the hall. All the fittings were of bright gold and silver, and the floor was of copper, and the farther they advanced the brighter everything shone, without any apparent end. At last the old man asked to turn back, and the dwarf said, "It is well that you mentioned it, for a little farther on the gold shines so brilliantly that the eyes of mortal men cannot endure it. And there dwells our good and mighty king, with his noble consort, surrounded by the bold heroes and lovely dames of our realm." "You told me the gentry and dependants were not at home," said the old man, "but who were all the people who were talking and laughing

near the door, and the children who were playing with all manner of costly toys of gold and silver? Don't they belong to your people?" "Half-way indeed, but not quite," said the dwarf. "They are, if I may be permitted to tell you, people from your world, who all sank into our kingdom, sooner or later. But they live a very pleasant life here, and have no wish to return to your world, even if they were permitted. For whoever comes to our kingdom must stay with us." "Must I stay here too?" asked the old man startled, not knowing what preparations he had to make for the life below. "Do you find our home so bad?" asked the dwarf. "But fear nothing, and don't alarm yourself. This day you can go or stay, as you please. I led you in freely, and will lead you out freely. But this is the first time that a mortal man has been permitted to leave our abode." Then the old man asked, "Shall I never see my father again?" and tears stood in his eyes once more. The dwarf answered, "You would not see him again till after three weeks, when the ice has become strong and firm. Your father will then have finished his work for the year, and can pass his time pleasantly with us till another year has passed, and he must again perform his

office for a month." "Must he then do this work for ever, and remember his misfortune every year?" asked the old man sadly. The dwarf answered, "He must perform this duty till another mortal accidentally damages our roof and sinks down himself. Then is the first man released from his journeying under the young ice, and the other must henceforth take the work upon himself."

As they were thus conversing, the old man and his guide reached the gate. Then they looked in each other's faces, and the dwarf gave the old man two rods of copper with a friendly smile, and said, "If you ever come to this gate, and don't find me on guard, but some one whom you don't know, strike these rods together, and I will do what you wish, as far as I can." Then he led his guest through the lofty gate, and accompanied him through the bronze passage to the outer gate, and opened it. Then the old man found himself standing again on the banks of the lake near the mouth of the river, as if he had fallen from the clouds. The door had vanished, but the rods in his hand showed him that what he had seen was a reality. He put them in his pocket, and wandered home sunk in deep thought, and dazed like a drunken man. But here he found

no rest or pleasure in anything. He went to the mouth of the river on the lake daily for three weeks, and sat on the rock as if in a dream ; and at last he disappeared, and never came home again.

Kreutzwald relates that every autumn a little grey man, who lives in the Ülemiste järv, rises from it to see if the new buildings are sufficiently decorated. When he has finished his inspection, he returns to the lake ; but if he was so dissatisfied as to turn his head in the opposite direction, evil would come on Tallin (Revel), for the low-lying country would be inundated, and the town would be destroyed.

The following tales relate to beings inhabiting the sea.

THE FAITHLESS FISHERMAN.

(JANNSEN.)

A FISHERMAN was sleeping on the sand, by the Baltic, when a stranger roused him, telling him that the sea was full of fish. They fished together all day, when the boat was filled, and the stranger sent the fisherman to sell the fish, insisting that he

should bring him half the profits, and give the other half to his own wife. Next day they would go fishing again. This went on day after day, and the stranger regularly received half the proceeds of the work, giving back a trifle to the fisherman in return for the use of the boat and tackle. When everything was arranged, he used to disappear behind a large stone.

Thus the fisherman became rich. He built himself a cottage, and bought a new boat, and sometimes he indulged in a glass to quench his thirst.

One day it occurred to him to give his partner less than his due; but next day the results of their fishing were much smaller, and the stranger looked at him sorrowfully. In the evening the fisherman went to sell the fish, but gave his partner still less than the day before. Next day, when they cast the nets, they did not take a single fish, and the stranger said, "You have cheated me two days running, and now you must die." He then threw the fisherman overboard, and two days afterwards his body was found on the beach and buried. As his wife stood weeping by his grave, a tall, strong man approached, who told her to dry her tears; for if he had not drowned her husband, he would have

died on the gallows. He then gave her a bag of money, telling her that her husband had gained it honestly, and that he was the water-sprite. Then he disappeared, leaving the money, and the widow went home and lived happily with her children.

Another curious story relative to water-sprites is that of the mermaid and the lord of Pahlen (Kreutzwald). The latter found the maiden sitting on a stone by the sea-shore, and lamenting because her father, the king of the sea, compelled her to raise storms, in which many people perished, in order to please the Mother of the Winds. The nobleman freed her from her trouble by breaking the ring with which she raised the storms with his teeth, and she rewarded him with two large barrels of gold.

The following short stories relate to different classes of spirits of the air.

THE SPIRITS OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS.

(JANNSEN.)¹

A CERTAIN nobleman was in the habit of driving away from his mansion every Thursday during hard winters, and not returning till towards morning. But he had strictly forbidden all his people to accompany him, or to receive him on his return. He himself harnessed the horse to the sledge, and unharnessed him when he returned. But no one was permitted to see the horse and carriage, and he threatened every one with death who should venture into his secret stable in the evening. During the day he carried the stable key in his bosom, and at night he hid it under his pillow.

But the nobleman's coachman heeded not the strict prohibition of his master, for he was much too anxious to know where his master went every Thursday, and what the horse and carriage were like. So he contrived one Thursday to get into the stable, and he hid himself in a dark corner near the door.

¹ In Canto xvi. of the *Kalevipoeg*, the spirits of the Northern Lights are described as carrying on mimic combats in the air.

He had not long to wait before his master came and opened the door. All at once it became as light as if many candles had been kindled in the great stable. The coachman crouched together in his corner like a hedgehog, for if his master had seen him, he would certainly have suffered the threatened punishment.

Then the master pushed the sledge forward, and it shone like a red-hot anvil.

But while the master went to fetch the horse, the coachman crept under the sledge.

The nobleman harnessed the horse, and threw cloths over the horse and the sledge, that the people about the yard should not see the wonderful radiance.

Then the coachman crept quietly from under the sledge, and hid himself behind on the runners, where by good luck his master did not notice him.

When all was ready, the nobleman sprang into the sledge, and they went off so rapidly that the runners of the sledge resounded, always due north. After some hours, the coachman saw that the cloths were gone from the horse and sledge, which shone again like fire.

Now, too, he perceived that ladies and gentlemen

were driving up from all directions with similar sledges and horses. That was a rush and rattle! The drivers rushed past each other as though it was for a very heavy wager, or as if they were on their wedding journey. At last the coachman perceived that their course lay above the clouds, which stretched below them like smooth lakes.

After a time, the racers fell more and more behind, and the coachman's master said to his nearest companion, "Brother, the other spirits of the Northern Lights are departing. Let us go too!"

Then the master and coachman drove fast home. Next day people said they had never seen the Northern Lights so bright as the night before.

The coachman held his tongue, and trusted no one with the story of his nocturnal journey. But when he was old and grey he told the story to his grandson, and so it became known to the people. And it was said that such spirits still exist, and that when the Northern Lights flame in the heavens in winter they hold a wedding in the sky.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WHIRLWIND.

(JANNSEN.)

TWO men were walking together when they saw a haystack carried away by the wind. The elder man said it was the Spirit of the Whirlwind; but the other would not believe him till they saw a cloud of dust, when they turned their backs to it, and the young man repeated a spell after the old one. When they turned round, they saw an old grey man with a long white beard, a broad flapping coat, and streaming hair, devastating the woods. He took no notice of them, but the elder one cautioned the other not to forget to repeat the spell whenever he saw him. However, he forgot it, and the whirlwind in a fury carried him many miles from home, and ever afterwards persecuted him till he went to his friend and learned the spell again. Next time he saw the whirlwind he was fishing; and on his repeating the spell, the spirit passed him angrily, and a great wave surged up from the river, and wetted the man to the skin. But after that the spirit never reappeared to him, and left him in peace.

THE WILL O' THE WISPS.

(JANNSEN.)

A FARMER was driving home one winter evening from Fellin across the Parika heath, when he suddenly saw a little blue flame on one side, and his horse stopped short and would not move. It was as if he had been stopped by a ditch. He dismounted, and found not a ditch, but an open pit; and he could not drive round it, because there was deep water on all sides. Presently he saw a light flare up like a torch, and then another, till many of them were flitting about everywhere. In consternation, the farmer cried out, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what's going on here to-night?" The horse sprang forward, as if somebody had stuck a pin into him, and the farmer had only just time to tumble on the sledge, when they went off at full gallop; and the farmer could say that the name of God had occurred to him just at the right time.

THE FOUNDLING.

(JANNSEN.)¹

ONE evening a little boy was sleeping restlessly in a village on the island of Dagö. His father saw a small hole which had been bored in the wall, and thinking that the draught disturbed the child, he stopped it up. He then saw a beautiful little girl playing with the boy, and preventing him from sleeping quietly. As she could not get away again, she remained in the house; and when the children grew up, they married, and had two children. One Sunday they went to church, and the wife laughed; but when her husband asked why, she replied that she would tell him if he told her how she came into his house. Thinking no harm, he promised to tell her, as he had heard the story from his father. Then she told him that she saw a great horse-skin spread on the wall of the church, on which the devil wrote the names of all the people who slept or talked in church instead of attending to the word of God. When it was full, he tried to stretch it with his

¹ Latham (*Nationalities of Europe*, i. p. 34) relates a very similar Lithuanian story of a Lauma or Nightmare.

teeth, but in doing so, he knocked his head against the wall and made a wry face, and she laughed. When they got home, he took the wooden plug from the hole, and showed it to his wife, but she instantly disappeared through it and never returned. The man wept himself blind, but the children grew up and prospered all their lives. People said their mother visited them secretly and brought treasures to the house.

The next story introduces us to the Gnomes, who appear to come more frequently into contact with human beings than any of the other nature-spirits, perhaps because their nature may be more akin to that of man. They are seen with more or less similar characteristics in all the mining countries of Northern Europe, whether Celtic, as Ireland and the Isle of Man; Teutonic, as England, Germany, and Scandinavia; or Finnish-Ugrian. They were well known to the old Norsemen as the *Dvergar*.

THE CAVE-DWELLERS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time a man lost his way on a stormy night between Christmas and New Year. He wore out his strength plunging through the deep snow-drifts, until, by good luck, he found some protection from the wind under a thick juniper bush. Here he resolved to pass the night, hoping to find his way easier by the clear light of the morning. He rolled himself together like a hedgehog in his warm fur-cloak and fell asleep. I don't know how long he lay there before he was roused by somebody shaking him, and a stranger's voice said in his ear, "Get up, farmer, or the snow will bury you, and you will never get out again." The sleeper pushed his head out of his fur, and opened his sleepy eyes wide. He saw a tall thin man before him, who carried a young fir-tree, twice as high as himself, as his staff.

"Come with me," said the man; "we have made a fire under the trees, where you can rest better than in this open field." The traveller could not refuse such a friendly invitation, so he got up

directly, and walked on quickly with the stranger. The snowstorm raged so furiously that they could not see a step before them, but when the stranger lifted his fir staff and cried with a loud voice, "Ho there, mother of the snowstorm, make way!" a broad pathway appeared before them, on which no snowflakes fell. A dreadful snowstorm raged on either side of the wanderers and behind them, but it did not touch them. It appeared as if an invisible wall held back the storm on either hand. The men soon reached the wood, and they had already seen the light of the fire from afar off. "What is your name?" asked the man with the fir staff, and the peasant answered, "Hans, the son of tall Hans."

Three men sat at the fire, clothed in white linen garments, as if it had been midsummer. For thirty paces or more around them, everything looked like summer; the moss was dry, the herbage was green, and the grass swarmed with ants and small beetles; but afar off Hans heard the blasts of wind and the raging of the storm. Still stranger seemed the burning fire, which spread a bright light around, but threw up no smoke. "What think you, tall Hans' son? isn't this a better resting-place for the night than under the juniper bush in the open field?"

Hans assented, and thanked the stranger for bringing him there. Then he took off his fur-cloak, rolled it up as a pillow for his head, and lay down in the glow of the fire. The man with the fir staff took his flask from under a bush and offered Hans a drink, which tasted most excellent, and warmed his heart. He then lay down too, and began conversing with his companions in a foreign language, of which Hans could not understand a word; and Hans presently fell asleep.

When he awoke, he found himself lying in a strange place, where was neither wood nor fire. He rubbed his eyes, and tried to recollect what had happened to him the night before, and thought he must have been dreaming, but he could not understand how he came to be lying in quite a strange place. A great noise resounded from a distance, and he felt the ground under his feet tremble. Hans listened for some time to find out where the noise came from, and then determined to follow it, hoping to find some people. Presently he reached the entrance to a cavern, from which the noise proceeded, and where a fire was shining. When he entered, he found a huge smithy filled with bellows and anvils, and seven workmen stood round each

anvil. But stranger smiths were not to be found in the world. They were not higher than the knee of an ordinary man, and their heads were larger than their own bodies, and they wielded hammers more than twice as large as themselves. But they smote on the anvil so lustily with these huge iron hammers that the strongest man could not have struck harder. The little smiths were clad in leathern aprons which reached from the neck to the feet; but at the back their bodies were as naked as God had made them. In the background a high bench stood against the wall, on which sat Hans' friend with the fir staff, and looked sharply after the work of the little journey-men. A large can stood at his feet, from which the workmen took a drink now and then. The master of the smithy was no longer dressed in white, as on the previous day, but wore a black sooty coat, and round his waist a leathern belt with a great buckle. Now and then he made a sign to the workmen with his fir staff, for the noise was so great that no human voice could have been heard. Hans was uncertain whether any one had noticed him, for both master and men continued their work without paying any attention

to the stranger. After some hours, the little smiths were allowed to rest; the bellows were stopped, and the heavy hammers thrown on the ground. When the workmen had left, the master rose from the bench, and called to Hans to approach.

Oh, what riches and treasure Hans beheld there! All sorts of gold and silver lay about everywhere, and glittered and gleamed before his eyes. Hans amused himself by counting the bars of gold in a single heap, and had just counted up to five hundred and seventy, when the master turned round and said, smiling, "You'd better leave off, for it will take up too much time. You would do better to take some bars from the heap, for I will give you them as a remembrance."

Of course Hans needed no second invitation. He grasped one of the bars of gold with both hands, but could not even move it, much less lift it from its place. The master laughed, and said, "Poor delicate flea! you cannot carry off even the least of my treasures, so you must feast your eyes on them instead." He then led Hans into another room, and through a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth of these treasure-caverns, till they reached the seventh, which was as big as a large church, and, like the others,

was crammed with heaps of gold and silver from floor to ceiling. Hans marvelled at these immeasurable riches, which could easily have bought up all the kingdoms in the world, but which were now lying useless underground. So he asked the master, "Why do you store up these vast treasures here, where no human being can derive any benefit from the gold and silver? If these treasures came into the hands of men, they would all be rich, and nobody would have to work or suffer distress."

"It is for this very reason," answered the master, "that I cannot hand over these treasures to mankind. The whole world would perish from sloth, if no one needed longer to work for his daily bread. Man is created to sustain himself by toil and thrift."

But Hans did not like this view of the matter, and disputed energetically with the master. At last he asked him to explain how it was that all this gold and silver was the property of one man and was left to rust, and why the master of the treasure incessantly laboured to increase it when he had already such an amazing superfluity of riches. The master answered, "I am not a man, although I have the form and appearance of one. I belong to a nobler race, which was formed by the decree of the

Creator to rule the world.¹ By his decree, I must work constantly with my little companions to prepare gold and silver under the earth, and every year a small portion is assigned to the use of men, but not more than just sufficient for their necessities. No one is allowed to receive the gift without trouble. So we are obliged to pound up the gold first, and mix the grains with earth, clay, and sand, and they are afterwards found by chance in this mass, and must be diligently sought for. But, my friend, we must break off our conversation, for it is almost noon. If you would like to look at my treasures longer, stay here, and rejoice your heart with the glitter of gold till I come to call you to dinner." Thereupon he left Hans alone.

Hans wandered about again from one treasure-chamber to another, and now and then he attempted to lift one of the smaller pieces of gold, but found it quite impossible. In former times, he had often heard clever people say how heavy gold was, but he would never believe it. Now, however, he learned it from his own experience. After a time the master returned, but he was so much altered that Hans did not recognise him at first sight. He wore red flame-

¹ Jannsen regards this master-smith as Ilmarine.

coloured silken robes, richly decorated with golden lace and golden fringes. He wore a broad gold belt round his waist, and a gold crown adorned his head, sparkling with jewels like stars on a clear winter's night. Instead of the fir staff, he now held a small gold sceptre in his hand, which branched in such a way that it looked like a shoot of the great fir staff.

After the royal master of the treasure had locked the doors of the treasure-chambers and put the key in his pocket, he took Hans by the hand and led him from the smithy to another room where dinner was set out. The seats and tables were of silver, and in the midst of the room stood a beautiful dinner-table, with a silver chair on each side. All the utensils, such as cups, dishes, plates, jugs, and mugs, were of gold. When the master and his guest had seated themselves at the table, twelve dishes were presented in succession. The waiters were just like the little men in the smithy, only that they were not naked, but wore clean white clothes. Their quickness and dexterity was very remarkable, for although they did not appear to be provided with wings, they moved about as lightly as birds. They were not tall enough to reach the table, and

were obliged to skip up to it like fleas. Meantime they held the great dishes and tureens in their hands, and were so skilful that they did not spill a drop of the contents. During dinner the little waiters poured mead and delicate wines into the mugs, and handed them to the company. The master carried on a friendly conversation, and explained many mysteries to Hans. Thus, when they came to talk over his nocturnal meeting with Hans, he said, "Between Christmas and New Year I am accustomed to amuse myself by wandering about the world, to watch the doings of men, and to make myself acquainted with some of them. I cannot say anything very remarkable about those whom I have seen and talked to. Most men live only to injure and plague each other. Everybody complains more or less of others. Nobody regards his own faults and failings, but lays the blame on others for what he has done himself."

Hans tried his best to dispute the truth of these words, but his friendly host made the waiters fill his glass so heedfully that his tongue became too heavy at last to utter another word, and he was equally unable to understand what his host said. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and knew nothing more of what happened.

While he slept, he had wonderfully vivid dreams, in which the gold bars constantly floated before him. As he felt much stronger in his dreams, he took a few gold bars on his back, and easily carried them away. But at last his strength failed under the heavy burden, and he was obliged to sit down and take breath. Then he heard loud voices, which he took to be the singing of the little smiths, and the bright fire from their forges shone in his eyes. When he looked up, blinking, he saw the green wood around him. He was lying on the flowery herbage, and it was not the forge fires, but the sun-rays which shone cheerfully on his face. He shook off his drowsiness, but it was some time before he could fully recall what had happened to him.

At last, when he had fully recovered his recollection, everything seemed so strange and wonderful to him that he could not reconcile it with the ordinary course of events. Hans reflected how he had wandered from the path during a stormy winter night between Christmas and New Year, and what had happened to him afterwards came back to his recollection. He had slept by a fire with a stranger, and next day the stranger, who carried a fir staff,

had received him as his guest. He had dined with him and had drunk a good deal; in short, he had spent a few days in jollity and carousal. But now it was the height of summer all around him; there must be magic in it all. When he stood up, he found that he was close by the ashes of an extinguished fire, which shone wonderfully in the sun. But when he examined the place more carefully, he saw that the supposed heap of ashes was fine silver dust, and the remaining sticks were bright gold. Oh, what luck! where could he find a bag in which to carry the treasure home? Necessity is the mother of invention. Hans pulled off his winter fur coat, swept the silver ashes together, so that not a particle was left, put the gold faggots and silver ashes into the fur, and tied it together with his belt like a bag, so that nothing could fall out. Although it was not a large bundle, he found it awfully heavy, so that he had to drag it manfully before he could find a suitable place to hide his treasure.

Thus Hans became suddenly enriched by an unexpected stroke of good fortune, and might have bought himself an estate. But after taking counsel with himself, he decided that it was better for him

to leave his old dwelling-place, and to look for a fresh one at some distance, where the people did not know him. There he bought himself a nice piece of land, and he had still a good stock of money left over. Then he took to himself a wife, and lived happily like a rich man to the end of his days. Before his death he told his children his secret, and how he had visited the master of the underground treasures, who had made him rich. The story was spread about by his children and grandchildren.

Leaving the gnomes, we will now proceed to the wood-spirits, who may properly be classed among the nature-spirits, though they are not exactly spirits of the elements.

THE COMPASSIONATE WOODCUTTER.

(JANNSEN.)

THIS is a story of a man who went into the forest to fell wood, but each tree begged for mercy in a human voice, and he desisted. Afterwards an old man emerged from the thicket. He had a long grey beard, a shirt of birch-bark, and a coat of pine-bark, and

he thanked the woodcutter for sparing his children, and gave him a golden rod, which would fulfil all wishes that were not so extravagant as to be impossible.

If he wanted a building erected, he was to bend the rod down three times towards an ant-hill, but not to strike it, for fear of hurting the ants. If he wanted food, he must ask the kettle to prepare what he wanted; and if he wanted honey, he must show the rod to the bees, who would bring him more than he needed, and the trees should yield sap, milk, and salve. If he needed fabrics, the loom would prepare all he needed. Then the old man declared himself to be the wood-god and disappeared.

But the man found a quarrelsome wife at home, who abused him for bringing no wood, and wished that all the birch twigs in the forest would turn to rods for the lazy hide. "Let it be so," said the man to the rod, and his wife got a sound birching.

Then he ordered the ants to build him a new storehouse in the enclosure, and next morning it was finished. He now lived a happy life, and left the rod to his children; but in the third generation it fell to a foolish man, who began to demand all sorts of absurd and impossible things. At length he

ordered the rod to fetch the sun and stars from heaven to warm his back. But although the sun did not move, God sent down such hot rays from it, that the offender and all his house and goods were burned up, so that no trace of them was left. What became of the rod is unknown, but it is thought that the trees in the wood were so terrified by the fire that they have never spoken a word since.

There is a short Christian variant of this story (Jannsen: Veckenstedt), in which the woodcutter meets not Tapio, but Jesus, who deprives the trees of speech. But a gentle sighing and rustling of leaves is still to be heard in the woods when the trees whisper together. When the first fir-tree was felled, she shed bitter tears, which hardened into resin. But her children, the fir cones, vowed to avenge her wrongs on men, so they transformed themselves into bugs, which crept into men's houses, and still plague and torment them.

Our next story is a very odd one about a hat.

THE GOOD DEED REWARDED.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time a young countryman was busy raking up his hay in the meadow, when a threatening thundercloud which arose on the horizon caused him to hasten with his work. He was lucky enough to complete it before the rain began, and he then turned his steps homewards. On his way he perceived a stranger asleep under a tree. "He'll get his hide pretty well soaked if I leave him asleep here," thought the countryman, so he went to the stranger, and shook him till he roused him from a sound sleep. The stranger stood up, and turned pale when he saw the advancing thundercloud. He felt in his pocket, intending to give something to the man who had roused him, but unfortunately he found it empty. So he said hurriedly, "For the present I must remain your debtor, but a day will come when I shall be able to show you my gratitude for your kindness. Do not forget what I tell you. You will become a soldier. After you have been parted from your friends for years, a day will come when you will be seized with home-

sickness in a foreign country. When you look up, you will see a crooked birch-tree a few steps before you. Go to this tree, knock on the trunk three times, and say, 'Is the Humpback at home?' Then the rest will follow." As soon as he had finished speaking, the stranger hurried away and disappeared in an instant. The countryman went home too, and soon forgot his meeting with the sleeper on the road.

Some time afterwards the first part of the prophecy was fulfilled, for the countryman became a soldier, without his remembering anything of his adventure in the wood. He had already worn the uniform of a cavalry regiment for four years, when he was stationed with his regiment in North Finland. It fell to the turn of our friend to bring home the horses on a Whitsunday, while his jolly comrades off duty went singing to enjoy themselves at the inns. Suddenly the solitary groom was seized with such a fit of home-sickness as he had never known before. Tears filled his eyes, and charming pictures of home floated before his vision. Now, too, he remembered his sleeping friend in the wood, and his speech. Everything came before him as plainly and distinctly as if it had happened only yesterday.

He looked up, and saw before him, oddly enough, an old crooked birch-tree. More in jest than expecting any result, he went up to the tree, and did what he had been instructed. But the question, "Is the Humpback at home?" had scarcely passed his lips, when the stranger stood before him, and said, "My friend, it is good that you have come, for I was afraid that you had quite forgotten me. Isn't it true that you would be glad to be at home?" The cavalry soldier sobbed out, "Yes." Then the Humpback called into the tree, "Boys, which of you can run fastest?" A voice answered from the birch, "Father, I can run as fast as a grouse can fly."—"Very well, I want a quicker messenger to-day." A second voice answered, "I can run like the wind."—"I want a quicker messenger still," replied the father. Then a third voice answered, "I can run as fast as the thoughts of men."—"You are just to my mind. I want you now. Fill a four-hundredweight sack with money, and carry it home with my friend and benefactor." Then he seized hold of the soldier's hat and cried out, "Let the hat become a man, and let the man and the sack go home!" The soldier felt his hat fly off his head. He turned round to look for it, and found himself in his own father's room,

dressed like a countryman as before, and the great sack of money by his side.¹

At first he thought it was a dream, till he found that his good luck was real. As nobody made any inquiries after the deserter, he began to think at last that his lost hat had remained behind to do soldier's service in his stead. He related the wonderful story to his children before his death, and as the money had brought him happiness and prosperity, he could not suppose that it had been the gift of an evil spirit.

¹ The hat reminds us of the doll in the story of the Tontla Wood. In the original the stranger is simply called "Köwer." Jannsen interprets the name to mean "Köwer-silm" (Crooked-eye), and thinks the stranger might have been Tapio himself. But it appears to me from the whole context that he was simply the indwelling spirit of one particular crooked birch-tree, whom we find at the beginning of the story wandering at a distance from home.

SECTION VI

HEATH LEGENDS.

(JANNSEN.)

JANNSEN gives the following account of heath-spirits, &c. Abstracts of stories not included under other headings we have appended to his general observations.

In former days, when trees and bushes talked, animals and birds understood a wonderful language, and the Old Boy wandered about openly and unabashed, and wonderful things often happened on the heaths. He who wished to cross a heath must keep his eyes open day and night. In the daytime, indeed, no spectre dared to appear; but it often happened at night that people were teased and frightened on the heath. If any one was on the heath on a summer or autumn evening, he often heard a rustling and tapping in the bushes, and perhaps water suddenly spurted out under his feet. On winter evenings, or at midnight, he saw

little flames dancing on the moor, and if he went towards them, they disappeared suddenly, and danced up again in the distance. But if a man was on the moor at night-time, he could not escape from it till cockcrow. If a man had to fetch anything from the heath during hay-harvest, he heard strange voices, or heard a bird singing with a human voice; and whoever drove across the moor in winter with a light sledge must have heard an invisible hand striking against the tree-trunks or the ice. Then you whip up your horse, and hasten across the moor, if you can.

Jannsen also relates a story of a herd-boy who was scolding at some girls who were gathering berries on the heath, and defying the devil; when he was suddenly seized by the feet and dragged down into the ground, crying for help.

THE WONDERFUL HAYCOCK.

(JANNSEN.)

ONE autumn evening a girl was going home across a frozen heath, but though she walked fast, she shivered. Presently she was pestered by a moving

haycock without a band, which pressed upon her so closely that the hay pricked her face. This continued till midnight; but when a cock crew in the village, the haycock vanished, and the girl made her way home exhausted, and died within a week. Since then, the people say that cries for help have been heard from the heath by night. But they are very particular that every haycock shall be tied with a band. If thus secured, no evil spirit can interfere with it.

THE MAGIC EGG.

(JANNSEN.)

IN former days, people used to find bits of leather, and fragments of old gloves, shoes, and hats on the moor; but if anybody took them home, some misfortune befell him. One day a man found what he thought was a duck's egg, and boiled and ate it; but the more he ate, the more there seemed to be, and he could not finish it. Next morning the portion left proved to be not an egg, but half his neighbour's cat.

SECTION VII

LAKE LEGENDS.

ALTHOUGH Esthonia is not so distinctly a lake-country as Finland,¹ which is often called "The Land of Ten Thousand Lakes," yet it is a low swampy country, with many small lakes besides the great Lake Peipus, on the south-east, and lake stories of various kinds are numerous in Esthonian tales.

Jannsen relates that Lake Korküll or Oiso, in the district of Fellin in Livonia, stands on the site of a castle, the lord of which insisted on marrying his sister. He bribed a priest to perform the ceremony, but the castle sank into the ground with all present, and a lake arose in its stead.

We add a selection of Esthonian lake-stories.

¹ Finland itself means Fenland, and is only a translation of the native name Suomi.

LAKE PEIPUS.

(JANNSEN.)

IN former ages, a great and famous king named Karkus ruled over Esthonia. In his days, fierce bears and bison lurked in the thick forests, and elk and wild horses careered swiftly through the bushes. No merchants had yet arrived in ships from foreign parts, nor invading hosts with sharp swords, to set up the cross of the Christian God, and the people still lived in perfect freedom.

The palace of King Karkus was built of costly sparkling stones, and shone far off in the sun like gold. The palace lay near the holy forest, where dwelt three good white gods and three black evil ones. There dwelt the king and his court. His enemies feared him greatly, but his people loved him as a father.

Although the king had gold and honour in abundance, yet one thing was wanting to complete his happiness, for his wife had brought him no child. He promised immense gifts to the white gods if

they would only listen to his prayer and grant his wish. And behold, after seven years his prayer was answered, for the queen gave birth to twins. One was a boy, as bold and impetuous as his father, and one was a girl, with golden hair and eyes like blue harebells, which already smiled from the cradle on her mother. The king was full of joy, and made great offerings to the white gods, as he had vowed. But the black gods, who deemed themselves worthy of equal honour, were greatly offended at being despised by the king. So they went to the God of Death, and urged him to gaze on the king's son with his evil countenance and to destroy him.

Meantime the boy grew rapidly, and became the delight of his parents. But when he came to lisp the first word, he was struck by the evil glance of Death. From this hour he pined away, and at length died. But his sister, who was named Rannapuura, lived and flourished like a rose, as the only joy of her parents.

But the hatred of the evil powers was not appeased by the partial revenge which they had taken. So they contrived that when the king's daughter was seven years old, she fell into the power of the wicked witch Peipa. The witch carried Rannapuura

away to her horrible abode, which was in a rock beneath a lofty mountain ridge in Ingermanland. Here the poor child was compelled to pass ten years of her life. But notwithstanding her hard servitude to the witch, she grew up to maidenhood, and no maiden in the whole world was so fair as she. As the dawn shines ruddy on the borders of the horizon at daybreak and promises fine weather, so shone her gentle face in quiet restfulness, and her eyes proclaimed the angel heart in her bosom.

The king knew where his daughter was imprisoned, for a good spirit had informed him, but, mighty as he was, he could accomplish nothing against the craft and malice of the witch. So he abandoned all hope of rescuing his daughter from this place of suffering. At length the white gods took pity on the king's daughter and her parents; for the king sought their aid continually, and made them rich offerings. But even the gods did not venture to contend openly with the mighty Peipa; so they sought to effect their purpose by stratagem. They secretly sent a dove to Rannapuura with a silver comb, a carder, a golden apple, and a snow-white linen robe, and sent her this message: "Take the gifts of the white gods, and flee from your

prison as soon as you can. If Peipa pursues you, call on the white gods, and first cast the comb behind you; but if this is of no effect, drop the carder; but if this does not detain her, and she still follows on your heels, then throw the apple, and lastly the robe behind you. But be very careful not to make a mistake, and throw down the gifts in the right order."

Rannapuura promised the dove to obey her instructions exactly, thanked the white gods for their favours, and sent the dove home.

On the first Tuesday after the new moon, Peipa jumped upon an old broom at midnight, as the witches are accustomed to do, both here and in Ingermanland, every year, on the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth new moon, and thus flew away from the house. The maiden stole softly from her room long before dawn, and took the four gifts of the gods with her on her way. She ran straight towards her father's castle, as swiftly as she could. At mid-day, when she had already gone a good part of the way, she chanced to look round, and saw to her horror that the witch Peipa was pursuing her. In her right hand she swung a formidable bar of iron, and she was

mounted on a huge cock, who was close behind the princess. Then she cried aloud on the white gods, and cast the silver comb behind her. Instantly the comb became a rushing river, deep and broad and many miles long. Peipa gazed furiously after the fugitive, who was running swiftly on the opposite bank of the stream, and soon left her far behind. But after a time, the witch found a ford through the water, hurried across, and was soon close behind the maiden again. Now Rannapuura dropped the carder, and behold, a forest sprang up from it so thick and lofty that the witch and her hellish steed could not penetrate it, and she was forced to ride round it for a whole day.

The unfortunate princess had now been wandering for two nights and a day, without tasting a morsel of bread or daring to sleep an instant. Then her strength failed her, and on the second day the witch was again close on her heels, when she threw down the apple in her need; and this became a lofty mountain of granite. A narrow path, as if traced by a snake, wound up to the summit, and showed the witch her way. Before she could overcome this obstacle, another day had passed; but the princess had only gone a short distance farther, for sleep had

closed her weary eyes, and when she awoke, and could see her father's castle in the distance at last, the witch was so close upon her that she never hoped to escape. In great terror she flung the linen robe on the ground behind her. It fell broadside, and soon rushed forth into a vast lake, whose foaming waves raged wildly round the witch. A howling storm flung water and spray into the witch's face; her wickedness could not save her, nor could her steed, the hellish cock, escape. He raised his neck above the water, thrust up his beak, and beat the water with his wings, but it was all to no purpose, and he was miserably drowned. Peipa called on all the spirits of hell to aid her, with curses, but none of them appeared, and she sank into the depths howling. There she lies to this day in pain and torment. The pikes and other horrible creatures of the depths gnaw upon her and torture her incessantly. She strikes about her with her hands and feet, and twists and stretches her limbs in her great distress. Thence comes it that the lake, which is named Peipus after her, always rises in billows and stormy waves.

Rannapuura reached her father's castle in safety, and soon became the bride of a prince. But the king's name is still perpetuated in that of the church

at Karkus, and the estate of Rannapungern, which lies north of Peipus, on the boundary between Livonia and Esthonia, is named after Rannapuura. The river which rose from the silver comb is the river Pliha, with its shining waters. He who knows it now may understand its origin. It cannot run straight, but twists right and left like the teeth of a double comb, unites with the Narova, and falls with that river into the sea. The forest, too, remained until two hundred years ago, when the Swedes and Poles brought war into the land. The Poles concealed themselves in the forest, but the Swedes set fire to it and burned it down. The mountain formed by the apple of the princess is likewise standing, but its granite has become changed to sandstone.

THE LAKE AT EUSEKÜLL.

(JANNSEN.)

IN former times there was no lake at Euseküll, for it was carried there from the district of Oiso in Esthonia. One day a great black cloud

like a sack rolled up from the north, and drew up all the water from the lake of Oiso. Before the cloud ran a black bull bellowing angrily, and above in the cloud flew an old man crying incessantly, "Lake, go to Euseküll!" When the bull came to Euseküll, where the tavern now stands, he dug his horns into the ground, and formed two deep trenches, which any one may still see to the right of the path which leads to the tavern at Kersel.

Then the cloud rolled on farther, till it reached the district of Euseküll. All the people were making hay in the meadow, and when they saw the black cloud, they hastened with their work, to bring the hay under cover. Presently the cloud stood above them. First a great knife with a wooden handle fell down, and next all kinds of fish, and then it began to rain heavily.

The people hurried from the field to take shelter. But one girl who had left her string of beads on a haycock, and wanted to save it, neglected to escape. Suddenly the waves of the lake fell from above, and buried her beneath them. Since that time the lake at Euseküll has been inhabited by a water-nymph, who requires the offering of a human life every year.

There are several other Esthonian tales of lakes moving from one spot to another.

EMMU LAKE AND VIRTIS LAKE.

(KREUTZWALD.)

SOON after the Creation, Vanaisa¹ formed a beautiful lake, called the Emmu Lake, which was intended to furnish men with refreshing water at all times, but owing to the wickedness of men, he caused all the water to be absorbed by a waterspout. Now men had nothing but rain-water, and although rain-water and melted snow sometimes filled the old Emmu Lake, it was dirty and unrefreshing, and people called it the Virtis Lake.; But at length Vanaisa, took pity on the people, who had somewhat improved, and formed narrow channels in the earth, through which the waters of the old Emmu lake flow as springs. But to prevent their being too warm in summer and too cold in winter, a cold stone is put into the springs in spring, and replaced by a warm one in autumn.

¹ God is frequently called Vanaisa, the Old Father, just as the Devil is frequently called Vanapois, the Old Boy.

THE BLUE SPRING.

(JANNSEN.)

AT the foot of the Villina hill, near the church of Lais,¹ is a swamp where rises a spring of water, called from its colour the Blue Spring. It is said that the spring can produce rain or drought, and thus cause dearth or plenty. In time of drought three widows of the same name must go to the spring on a Sunday during service-time, to clean it out and to enlarge the opening. Each must take a spade, hoe, rake, a cake of bread, and a hymn-book with her. But if too much rain falls, the spring must be closed up to a mere crevice, and this is at once efficacious.

One day three widows named Anna opened the spring too wide, when a dreadful rain spread over the country. Sometimes it has happened that women who were about to clean the spring have failed to finish the work during church-time, and it has been fruitless. Another time the people wished

¹ In the neighbourhood of Dorpat.

to find out how deep was the spring. They let down a stone with a long cord, but drew the cord up without the stone. They then let down a kettle filled with stones, but, to their horror, they drew up a bleeding human head instead. They were about to make another trial, when a voice cried from the depths, "If you attempt this again, you will all sink!" So the depth of the Blue Spring is still unknown.

THE BLACK POOL.

(JANNSEN.)

IN time of war, a rich lord tried to escape from the country with his family and goods in a coach drawn by six horses. In their haste, the horses swerved from the path, and all were lost in a deep lake of black water. Since that time it has been haunted, and sometimes a black dog tries to entice boys in, or cats and birds are seen about it. One day a man was walking by the pool when his leg was seized, and he was dragged down, but he contrived to seize a bush of juniper, and saved him-

self.¹ Then he saw some maidens sporting in the water like white swans ; but presently they vanished. One day a fisherman caught a black tail-less pike, when the voice of the old nobleman was heard asking, "Are all the swine safe?" And another voice answered, "The old tail-less boar is missing." Many people, too, have seen a great hoop from a coach-wheel, as sharp as the edge of an axe, rise from the water.

¹ Dreadful stories are told in many countries of the fiends inhabiting the undrained swamps. Monsters as terrible as those described in "Beowulf" are popularly believed to have haunted the English fens almost to the present day. Aino, in the *Kalevala* (Runo 4), was lured into a lake by the sight of some maidens bathing ; and it is said that it is unsafe for sensitive people to venture near the banks of some of the Irish lakes in the evening, lest they should be lured into the water by the singing of the water-nymphs. In this connection, we may refer to the oft-quoted passage from the notes to Heywood's *Hierarchies of the Blessed Angels* (1635): "In Finland there is a castle, which is called the New Rock, moated about with a river of unsounded depth, the water black, and the fish therein very distasteful to the palate. In this are spectres often seen, which foreshow either the death of the Governor, or of some prime officer belonging to the place ; and most often it appeareth in the shape of a harper, sweetly singing and dallying and playing under the water."—See Southey's *Donica*.

SECTION VIII

STORIES OF THE DEVIL AND OF BLACK MAGIC.

STORIES relating to the Devil are very frequent in Esthonian literature, and notwithstanding the universal notion that you sell yourself to him by giving him three drops of your blood, or by signing a compact with your blood, yet many stories of this class are evidently pre-Christian. He is generally represented as a buffoon, and easily outwitted. Further particulars respecting him will be found in the Introduction. The stories incidentally referred to in this section of our work are mostly related by Jannsen.

As regards sorcery, the Esthonians appear to have regarded the Finns, and the Finns the Lapps, as proficient in magic, each people attributing most skill to those living north of themselves. However, it should be mentioned that there is a ballad in the Finnish *Kanteletar* in which the sun and moon are

represented as stolen by German and Esthonian sorcerers. In the *Kalevala* they are stolen by Louhi, the witch-queen of Lapland.

The first story of this series, "The Son of the Thunder-God," represents this demigod as actually selling his soul to the Devil, and tricking the Devil out of it. The Thunder-God is here called Paristaja, and also Vana Kōu; but in other tales he is usually called Pikne, and is no doubt identical with the Perkunas of the Lithuanians. In this story the Devil is called Kurat, the Evil One; and also Vanapoīs (the Old Boy), as in other tales.

The primitive manner in which the undutiful son tickles the nose of his august father is amusing. Vana (old) seems to be a term of respect applied to gods and devils alike.

THE SON OF THE THUNDER-GOD.¹

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time the son of the Thunder-God made a compact with the Devil. It was agreed that the

¹ There is a variant of this story (Pikne's Trumpet : Kreutzwald) in which Tūhi himself steals the trumpet while Pikne is asleep. Pikne

Devil was to serve him faithfully for seven years, and to do everything which his master required of him, after which he was to receive his master's soul as a reward. The Devil fulfilled his part of the bargain faithfully. He never shirked the hardest labour nor grumbled at poor living, for he knew the reward he had to expect. Six years had already passed by, and the seventh had begun; but the Thunderer's son had no particular inclination to part with his soul so easily, and looked about for some trick by which he could escape the necessity of fulfilling his share of the bargain. He had already tricked the Devil when the compact was signed, for instead of signing it with his own blood, he had signed it with cock's blood, and his short-sighted adversary had not noticed the difference. Thus the bond which the Devil thought perfectly secure was really a very doubtful one. The end of the time was approaching, and the Thunderer's son had not yet attempted to regain his freedom, when it happened one day that a black cloud arose in the sky, which

is afraid to apply for aid to the Old Father, for fear of being punished for losing it, but recovers it by an artifice similar to that employed in the present story. This is interesting as showing Pikne to be only a subordinate deity. Löwe considers the Thunderer's musical instrument to be a bagpipe.

foreboded a violent thunderstorm. The Devil immediately crept down underground, having made himself a hiding-place under a stone for that purpose. "Come, brother," said he to his master, "and keep me company till the tempest is over." "What will you promise me if I fulfil your request?" said the Thunderer's son. The Devil thought they might settle this down below, for he did not like to talk over matters of business just then, when the storm was threatening to break over them at any moment. The Thunderer's son thought, "The Old Boy seems quite dazed with terror to-day, and who knows whether I may not be able to get rid of him after all?" So he followed him into the cave. The tempest lasted a long time, and one crash of thunder followed another, till the earth quaked and the rocks trembled. At every peal the Old Boy pushed his fists into his ears and screwed up his eyes tight; a cold sweat covered his shaking limbs, and he was unable to utter a word. In the evening, when the storm was over, he said to the Thunderer's son, "If your old dad did not make such a noise and clatter now and then, I could get along with him very well, for his arrows could not hurt me underground. But this horrible clamour upsets me so

much that I am ready to lose my senses, and hardly know what I am about. I should be willing to offer a great reward to any one who would release me from this annoyance." The Thunderer's son answered, "The best plan would be to steal the thunder-weapon from my old dad."¹ "I'd do it if it were possible," answered the Devil, "but old Kōu is always on the alert. He keeps watch on the thunder-weapon day and night; and how is it possible to steal it?" But the Thunderer's son still maintained that the feat was possible. "Ay, if you would help me," cried the Devil, "we might perhaps succeed, but I can't manage it by myself." The Thunderer's son promised to help him, but demanded no less a reward than that the Devil should abandon his claim to his soul. "You may keep the soul with all my heart," cried the Devil delighted, "if you will only release me from this shocking worry and anxiety." Then the Thunderer's son began to explain how he thought the business might be managed, if they both worked well together. "But," he added, "we must wait till my old dad again tires himself out so much as to fall into a

¹ He does not call his father Vanaisa, which would identify him with the Supreme God, but uses another term, *Vana taat*.

sound sleep, for he generally sleeps with open eyes, like the hares."

Some time after this conversation, another violent thunderstorm broke out, which lasted a great while. The Devil and the Thunderer's son again retreated to their hiding-place under the stone. Terror had so stupefied the Old Boy, that he could not hear a word of what his companion said. In the evening they both climbed a high mountain, when the Old Boy took the Thunderer's son on his shoulders, and began to stretch himself out by his magic power higher and higher, singing—

" Higher, brother, higher,
To the Cloudland nigher,"

till he had grown up to the edge of the clouds. When the Thunderer's son peeped over the edge of the clouds, he saw his father Kōu sleeping quietly, with his head resting on a pillow of clouds, but with his right hand resting across the thunder-instrument. He could not seize the weapon, for he would have roused the sleeper by touching his hand. The Thunderer's son now crept from the Devil's shoulder along the clouds as stealthily as a cat, and taking a louse from behind his own ear, he set it on his father's nose. The old man raised his hand to

scratch his nose, when his son grasped the thunder-weapon, and jumped from the clouds on to the back of the Devil, who ran down the mountain as if fire was burning behind him, and he did not stop till he reached Põrgu. Here he hid the stolen property in an iron chamber secured by seven locks,¹ thanked the Thunderer's son for his friendly aid, and relinquished all claims upon his soul.

But now a misfortune fell upon the world and men which the Thunderer's son had not foreseen, for the clouds no longer shed a drop of moisture, and everything withered away with drought.² "If I have thoughtlessly brought this unexpected misery on the people," thought he, "I must try to repair the mischief as best I can." So he travelled north to the frontiers of Finland, where a noted sorcerer lived, and told him the whole story, and where the thunder-weapon was now hidden. Then said the sorcerer, "First of all, you must tell your old father Kōu where the thunder-weapon is hidden, and he will be able to find means for recovering his property himself." And he sent the Eagle of

¹ As Louhi, in the *Kalevala*, secures the magic mill, the Sampo.

² This story is probably connected with the Finnish and Esthonian legends of the theft of the sun and moon by sorcerers.

the North to carry the tidings to the old Father of the Clouds. Next morning Kōu himself called upon the sorcerer to thank him for having put him on the track of the stolen property. Then the Thunderer changed himself into a boy, and offered himself to a fisherman as a summer workman. He knew that the Devil often came to the lake to catch fish, and he hoped to encounter him there. Although the boy Pikker watched the net day and night, it was some time before he caught sight of his enemy. It often happened to the fisherman that when he left his nets in the lake at night, they had been emptied before the morning, but he could not discover the cause. The boy knew very well who stole the fish, but he would not say anything about it till he could show his master the thief.

One moonlight night, when the fisherman and the boy came to the lake to examine the nets, they found the thief at work. When they looked into the water over the side of their boat, they saw the Old Boy taking the fishes from the meshes of the net and putting them into a bag over his shoulder. Next day the fisherman went to a celebrated sorcerer and asked him to use his magic to cause the thief to fall into the net, and to enchant him so that he could

not escape without the owner's consent. This was arranged just as the fisherman wished. Next day, when the net was drawn up, they drew up the Devil to the surface and brought him ashore. And what a drubbing he received from the fisherman and his boy; for he could not escape from the net without the consent of the sorcerer. The fisherman gave him a ton's weight of blows on the body, without caring where they fell. The Devil soon presented a piteous sight, but the fisherman and his boy felt no pity for him, but only rested awhile, and then began their work afresh. Entreaties were useless, and at last the Devil promised the fisherman the half of all his goods if he would only release him from the spell. But the enraged fisherman would listen to nothing till his own strength failed so completely that he could no longer move his stick. At length, after a long discussion, it was arranged that the Old Boy should be released from the net with the sorcerer's aid, and that the fisherman and his boy should accompany the Devil to receive his ransom. No doubt he hoped to get the better of them by some stratagem.

A grand feast was prepared for the guests in the hall of Põrgu, which lasted for a whole week, and

there was plenty of everything. The aged host exhibited his treasures and precious hoards to his visitors, and made his players perform before the fisherman in their very best style. One morning the boy Pikker said to the fisherman, "If you are again feasted and fêted to-day, ask for the instrument which is in the iron chamber behind seven locks." The fisherman took the hint, and in the middle of the feast, when everybody was half-seas over, he asked to see the instrument in the secret chamber. The Devil was quite willing, and he fetched the instrument, and tried to play upon it himself. But although he blew into it with all his strength, and shifted his fingers up and down the pipe, he was not able to bring a better tone from it than the cry of a cat when she is seized by the tail, or the squeaking of a decoy-pig at a wolf-hunt. The fisherman laughed, and said, "Don't give yourself so much trouble for nothing. I see well enough that you'll never make a piper. My boy can manage it much better." "Oho," said the Devil, "you seem to think that playing this instrument is like playing the flageolet, and that it is mere child's play. Come, friend, try it; but if either you or your boy can bring anything like a tune out of the

instrument, I won't be prince of hell any longer. Only just try it," said he, handing the instrument to the boy. The boy Pikker took the instrument, but when he put it to his mouth and blew into it, the walls of hell shook, and the Devil and his company fell senseless to the ground and lay as if dead. In place of the boy the old Thunder-god himself stood by the fisherman, and thanked him for his aid, saying, "In future, whenever my instrument is heard in the clouds, your nets will be well filled with fish." Then he hastened home again.

On the way his son met him, and fell on his knees, confessing his fault, and humbly asking pardon. Then said Father Kōu, "The frivolity of man often wars against the wisdom of heaven, but you may thank your stars, my son, that I have recovered the power to annihilate the traces of the suffering which your folly has brought on the people." As he spoke, he sat down on a stone, and blew into the thunder-instrument till the rain-gates were opened, and the thirsty earth could drink her fill. Old Kōu took his son into his service, and they live together still.

In our next story we shall see the Devil and his

companions overreaching themselves in a manner worthy of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, while in the Polyphemus story already referred to under *Cosmopolitan Tales* we find the Devil blinded and perishing miserably.

THE MOON-PAINTER.

(JANNSEN.)

WHEN the Lord God had created the whole world, the work did not turn out so complete as it ought to have done, for there was an insufficiency of light. In the daytime the sun pursued his course through the firmament, but when he sank at evening, when the evening glow faded into twilight, and all grew dark, thick darkness covered heaven and earth, until the morning redness took the dawn from the hand of the evening glow and heralded a new day. There was neither moonlight nor starlight, but darkness from sunset to sunrise.

The Creator soon perceived the deficiency, and sought to remedy it. So he ordered Ilmarine¹ to

¹ Ilmarine or Ilmarinen is the Vulcan of the Finnish and Esthonian legends. He is represented in the *Kalevala* as a young and handsome hero, but deficient in courage. In Esthonian tales he generally

see that it should be light on earth by night as well as by day. Ilmarine listened to the command, and went to his forge, where he had already forged the firmament. He threw in silver, and cast it into a large round ball. He covered it with thick gold, lighted a bright fire inside, and ordered it to proceed on its course across the sky. Then he forged innumerable stars, covered them thinly with gold, and fixed each in its place in the firmament.

Now began a new life for the earth. The sun had hardly set, and was borne away by the evening glow, when the golden moon arose from the borders of the sky, set out on his blue path, and illuminated the darkness of night just as the sun illumines the day. Around him twinkled the innumerable host of stars, and accompanied him like a king, until at length he reached the other side of the heavens. Then the stars retired to rest, the moon quitted the firmament, and the sun was conducted by the

appears as a demigod. In the *Kalevala* he plays a part second only to that of Väinämöinen himself, but fails in many of his undertakings; for though he is said to have forged the sky, he cannot confer speech or warmth on the bride of gold and silver whom he forges for himself after his first wife has been given to the wolves and bears by Kullervo; and when he forges a new sun and moon, after the old ones have been stolen by Louhi, they turn out miserable failures.

morning redness to his place, in order that he should give light to the world.

After this, ample light shone upon the earth from above both by day and by night; for the face of the moon was just as clear and bright as that of the sun, and his rays diffused equal warmth. But the sun often shone so fiercely by day that no one was able to work. Thus they preferred to work under the light of the nocturnal keeper of the heavens, and all men rejoiced in the gift of the moon.

But the Devil was very much annoyed at the moon, because he could not carry on his evil practices in his bright light. Whenever he went out in search of prey, he was recognised a long way off, and was driven back home in disgrace. Thus it came about that during all this time he only succeeded in bagging two souls.

So he sat still day and night pondering on what he could do to better his prospects. At last he summoned two of his companions, but they could not give him any good advice. So the three of them consulted together in care and trouble, but nothing feasible occurred to them. On the seventh day they had nothing left to eat, and they sat there

sighing, rubbing their empty stomachs, and racking their brains with thought. At last a lucky idea occurred to the Devil himself.

"Comrades," he exclaimed, "I know what we can do. We must get rid of the moon, if we want to save ourselves. If there's no moon in the sky, we shall be just as valiant heroes as before. We can carry out our great undertakings by the dim starlight."

"Shall we pull down the moon from heaven?" asked his servants.

"No," said the Devil, "he is fixed too tight, and we can't get him down. We must do something more likely to succeed. The best we can do is to take tar and smear him with it till he's black. He may then run about the sky as he pleases, but he can't give us any more trouble. The victory then rests with us, and rich booty awaits us."

The fiendish company approved of the plan of their chief, and were all anxious to get to work. But it was too late at the time, for the moon was just about to set, and the sun was rising. But they worked zealously at their preparations all day till late in the evening. The Devil went out and stole a barrel of tar, which he carried to his accomplices

in the wood. Meantime, they had been engaged in making a long ladder in seven pieces, each piece of which measured seven fathoms. Then they procured a great bucket, and made a mop of lime-tree bast, which they fastened to a long handle.

Then they waited for night, and as soon as the moon rose, the Devil took the ladder and the barrel on his shoulder and ordered his two servants to follow him with the bucket and the mop. When they reached a suitable spot, they filled the bucket with tar, threw a quantity of ashes into it, and dipped in the mop. Just at this moment the moon rose from behind the wood. They hastily raised the ladder, and the Devil put the bucket into the hand of one of his servants, and told him to make haste and climb up, while he stationed the other under the ladder.

Now the Devil and his servant were standing under the ladder to hold it, but the servant could not bear the weight, and it began to shake. The other servant who had climbed up missed his footing on a rung of the ladder, and fell with the bucket on the Devil's neck. The Devil began to pant and shake himself like a bear, and swore frightfully. He paid no more attention to the ladder, and

let it go, so it fell on the ground with a thundering crash, and broke into a thousand pieces.

When the Devil found that his work had prospered so ill, and that he had tarred himself all over instead of the moon, he grew mad with rage and fury. He washed and scoured and scraped himself, but the tar and soot stuck to him so tight that he keeps his black colour to the present day.

But although the first experiment had failed, the Devil would not give up his plan. Next day he stole seven more ladders, bound them firmly together, and carried them to the edge of the wood where the moon stands lowest. In the evening, when the moon rose, the Devil planted the ladder firmly on the ground, steadied it with both hands, and sent the other servant up to the moon, cautioning him to hold very tight and beware of slipping. The servant climbed up as quickly as possible with the bucket, and arrived safely at the last rung of the ladder. Just then the moon rose from behind the wood in regal splendour. Then the Devil lifted up the whole ladder, and carried it hastily to the moon. What a great piece of luck! It was really just so long that its end reached the moon.

Then the Devil's servant set to work in earnest.

But it's not an easy task to stand on the top of such a ladder and to tar the moon's face over with a mop. Besides, the moon didn't stand still at one place, but went on his appointed course steadily. So the servant tied himself to the moon with a rope, and being thus secure from falling, he took the mop from the bucket, and began to blacken the moon first on the back. But the thick gilding of the pure moon would not suffer any stain. The servant painted and smeared, till the sweat ran from his forehead, until he succeeded at last, with much toil, in covering the back of the moon with tar. The Devil below gazed up at the work with his mouth open, and when he saw the work half finished he danced with joy, first on one foot, and then on the other.

When the servant had blackened the back of the moon, he worked himself round to the front with difficulty, so as to destroy the lustre of the guardian of the heavens on that side also. He stood there at last, panted a little, and thought, when he began, that he would find the front easier to manage than the other side. But no better plan occurred to him, and he had to work in the same way as before.

Just as he was beginning his work again, the

Creator woke up from a little nap. He was astonished to see that the world had become half black, though there was not a cloud in the sky. But, when he looked more sharply into the cause of the darkness, he saw the Devil's servant perched on the moon, and just dipping his mop into the bucket in order to make the front of the moon as black as the back. Meantime the Devil was capering for joy below the ladder, just like a he-goat.

"Those are the sort of tricks you are up to behind my back!" cried the Creator angrily. "Let the evil-doers receive the fitting reward of their offences. You are on the moon, and there you shall stay with your bucket for ever, as a warning to all who would rob the earth of its light. My light must prevail over the darkness, and the darkness must flee before it. And though you should strive against it with all your strength, you would not be able to conquer the light. This shall be made manifest to all who gaze on the moon at night, when they see the black spoiler of the moon with his utensils."

The Creator's words were fulfilled. The Devil's servant still stands in the moon to this day with his bucket of tar, and for this reason the moon

does not shine so brightly as formerly. He often descends into the sea to bathe, and would like to cleanse himself from his stains, but they remain with him eternally. However bright and clear he shines, his light cannot dispel the shadows which he bears, nor pierce through the black covering on his back. When he sometimes turns his back to us, we see him only as a dull opaque creature, devoid of light and lustre. But he cannot bear to show us his dark side long. He soon turns his shining face to the earth again, and sheds down his bright silvery light from above ; but the more he waxes, the more distinct becomes the form of his spoiler, and reminds us that light must always triumph over darkness.

In the following narrative we have a horrible story of black magic, which, however, is extremely interesting as showing the prevalence of fetishism, which probably preceded the worship of the powers of nature among the Finns and Esthonians. The Kratt seems originally to have been nothing worse than Tont, the house-spirit, who robbed the neighbours for the benefit of his patrons, and it is probably only after the introduction of Christianity that he assumed the

diabolical character attributed to him in the present story.

THE TREASURE-BRINGER.

(JANNSEN.)

ONCE upon a time there lived a young farmer whose crops had totally failed. His harvest had been spoiled, his hay parched up, and all his cattle died, so that he was unable to perform his lawful obligations to his feudal superior. One Sunday he was sitting at his door in great trouble, just as the people were going to church. Presently Michel, an old fellow who used to wander about the country, came up. He had a bad reputation; people said that he was a wizard, and that he used to suck the milk from the cows, to bring storms and hail upon the crops, and diseases upon the people. So he was never allowed to depart without alms when he visited a farm.

"Good day, farmer," said Michel, advancing.

"God bless you," answered the other.

"What ails you?" said the old man. "You are looking very miserable."

"Alas! everything is going with me badly enough. But it is a good thing that you have come. People say that you have power to do much evil, but that you are a clever fellow. Perhaps you can help me."

"People talk evil of others because they themselves are evil," answered the old man. "But what is to be done?"

The farmer told him all his misfortunes, and Michel said, "Would you like to escape from all your troubles, and to become a rich man all at once?"

"With all my heart!" cried the other.

Old Michel answered, with a smile, "If I were as young and strong as you, and if I had sufficient courage to face the darkness of night, and knew how to hold my tongue, I know what I'd do."

"Only tell me what you know. I will do anything if I can only become rich, for I am weary of my life at present."

Then the old man looked cautiously round on all sides, and then said in a whisper, "Do you know what a Kratt is?"

The farmer was startled, and answered, "I don't know exactly, but I have heard dreadful tales about it."

"I'll tell you," said the old man. "Mark you, it is a creature that anybody can make for himself, but it must be done so secretly that no human eye sees it. Its body is a broomstick, its head a broken jug, its nose a piece of glass, and its arms two reels which have been used by an old crone of a hundred years. All these things are easy to procure. You must set up this creature on three Thursday evenings at a cross-road, and animate it with the words which I will teach you. On the third Thursday the creature will come to life."

"God preserve us from the evil one!" cried the farmer.

"What! you are frightened? Have I told you too much already?"

"No, I'm not frightened at all. Go on."

The old man continued, "This creature is then your servant, for you have brought him to life at a cross-road. Nobody can see him but his master. He will bring him all kinds of money, corn, and hay, as often as he likes, but not more at once than a man's burden."

"But, old man, if you knew all this, why haven't you yourself made such a useful treasure-carrier, instead of which you have remained poor all your life?"

"I have been about to do it a hundred times, and have made a beginning a hundred times, but my courage always failed me. I had a friend who possessed such a treasure-carrier, and often told me about it, but I could not screw up courage to follow his example. My friend died, and the creature, left without a master, lived in the village for a long time, and wrought all manner of tricks among the people. He once tore all a woman's yarn to pieces; but when it was discovered, and they were going to remove it, they found a heap of money underneath. After this no more was seen of the creature. At that time I should have been glad enough to have a treasure-bringer, but I am now old and grey, and think no more of it."

"I've plenty of courage," said the farmer; "but wouldn't it be better for me to consult the parson about it?"

"No; you mustn't mention it to anybody, but least of all to the parson; for if you call the creature to life, you sell your soul to the devil."

The farmer started back in horror.

"Don't be frightened," said the old man. "You are sure of a long life in exchange, and of all your heart desires. And if you feel that your last hour

is approaching, you can always escape from the clutches of the evil one, if you are clever enough to get rid of your familiar."¹

"But how can this be done?"

"If you give him a task which he is unable to perform, you are rid of him for the future. But you must set about it very circumspectly, for he is not easy to outwit. The peasant of whom I told you wanted to get rid of his familiar, and ordered him to fill a barrel of water with a sieve. But the creature fetched and spilled water, and did not rest till the barrel was filled with the drops which hung on the sieve."

"So he died, without getting rid of the creature?"

"Yes; why didn't he manage the affair better? But I have something more to tell you. The creature must be well fed, if he is to be kept in good-humour. A peasant once put a dish of broth under the roof for his familiar, as he was in the habit of doing. But a labourer saw it, so he ate the broth, and filled the dish with sand. The familiar came that night, and beat the farmer unmercifully, and continued to do so every night till he discovered the reason, and

¹ One of Michael Scot's familiars was a devil of this kind, whom he got rid of ultimately by setting him to spin ropes of sea-sand.

put a fresh dish of broth under the roof. After this he let him alone. And now you know all," said the old man.

The farmer sat silent, and at last replied, "There is much about it that is unpleasant, Michel."

"You asked for my advice," answered the old man, "and I have given it you. You must make your own choice. Want and misery have come upon you. This is the only way in which you can save yourself and become a rich man; and if you are only a little prudent, you will cheat the devil out of your soul into the bargain."

After some reflection, the farmer answered, "Tell me the words which I am to repeat on the Thursdays."

"What will you give me, then?" said the old man.

"When I have the treasure-bringer, you shall live the life of a gentleman."

"Come, then," said the old man, and they entered the house together.

After this Sunday the young farmer was seen no more in the village. He neglected his work in the fields, and left what little was left there to waste, and his household management went all astray.

His man loafed about the public-houses, and his maid-servant slept at home, for her master himself never looked after anything.

In the meantime the farmer sat in his smoky room. He kept the door locked, and the windows closely curtained. Here he worked hard day and night at the creature in a dark corner by the light of a pine-splinter. He had procured everything necessary, even the reels on which a crone of a hundred years old had spun. He put all the parts together carefully, fixed the old pot on the broom-stick, made the nose of a bit of glass, and painted in the eyes and mouth red. He wrapped the body in coloured rags, according to his instructions, and all the time he thought with a shudder that it was now in his power to bring this uncanny creature to life, and that he must remain with him till his end. But when he thought of the riches and treasures, all his horror vanished. At length the creature was finished, and on the following Thursday the farmer carried it after nightfall to the cross-roads in the wood. There he put down the creature, seated himself on a stone, and waited. But every time he looked at the creature he nearly fell to the ground with terror. If only a breeze sprung up,

it went through the marrow of his bones, and if only the screech-owl cried afar off, he thought he heard the croaking of the creature, and the blood froze in his veins. Morning came at last, and he seized the creature, and slunk away cautiously home.

On the second Thursday it was just the same. At length the night of the third Thursday came, and now he was to complete the charm. There was a howling wind, and the moon was covered with thick dark clouds, when the farmer brought the creature to the cross-roads at dead of night. Then he set it up as before, but he thought, "If I was now to smash it into a thousand pieces, and then go home and set hard at work, I need not then do anything wicked."

Presently, however, he reflected: "But I am so miserably poor, and this will make me rich. Let it go as it may, I can't be worse off than I am now."

He looked fearfully round him, turned towards the creature trembling, let three drops of blood fall on it from his finger, and repeated the magic words which the old man had taught him.

Suddenly the moon emerged from the clouds and shone upon the place where the farmer was standing before the figure. But the farmer stood petrified

with terror when he saw the creature come to life. The spectre rolled his eyes horribly, turned slowly round, and when he saw his master again, he asked in a grating voice, "What do you want of me?"

But the farmer was almost beside himself with fear, and could not answer. He rushed away in deadly terror, not caring whither. But the creature ran after him, clattering and puffing, crying out all the time, "Why did you bring me to life if you desert me now?"

But the farmer ran on, without daring to look round.

Then the creature grasped his shoulder from behind with his wooden hand, and screamed out, "You have broken your compact by running away. You have sold your soul to the devil without gaining the least advantage for yourself. You have set me free. I am no longer your servant, but will be your tormenting demon, and will persecute you to your dying hour."

The farmer rushed madly to his house, but the creature followed him, invisible to every one else.

From this hour everything went wrong with the farmer which he undertook. His land produced nothing but weeds, his cattle all died, his sheds fell

in, and if he took anything up, it broke in his hand. Neither man nor maid would work in his house, and at last all the people held aloof from him, as from an evil spirit who brought misfortune wherever he appeared.

Autumn came, and the farmer looked like a shadow, when one day he met old Michel, who saluted him, and looked scoffingly in his face.

"Oh, it's you," cried the farmer angrily. "It is good that I have met you, you hell-hound. Where are all your fine promises of wealth and good luck? I have sold myself to the devil, and I find a hell on earth already. But all this is your doing!"

"Quiet, quiet!" said the old man. "Who told you to meddle with evil things if you had not courage? I gave you fair warning. But you showed yourself a coward at the last moment, and released the creature from your service. If you had not done this, you might have become a rich and prosperous man, as I promised you."

"But you never saw the horrible face of the creature when he came to life," said the farmer in anguish. "Oh, what a fool I was to allow myself to be tempted by you!"

"I did not tempt you; I only told you what I knew."

"Help me now."

"Help yourself, for I can't. Haven't I more reason to complain of you than you of me? I have not deceived you; but where is my reward, and the fine life you promised me? You are the deceiver."

"All right! all right! Only tell me how I can save myself, and advise me what to do. I will perform everything."

"No," said the old man, "I have no further advice to give you. I am still a beggar, and it is all your fault;" and he turned round and left him.

"Curse upon you!" cried the farmer, whose last hope had vanished.

"But can't I save myself in any way?" said he to himself. "This creature who sits with the Devil on my neck is after all nothing but my own work, a thing of wood and potsherds. I must needs be able to destroy him, if I set about it right."

He ran to his house, where he now lived quite alone. There stood the creature in a corner, grinning, and asking, "Where's my dinner?"

"What shall I give you to get rid of you?"

"Where's my dinner? Get my dinner, quick. I'm hungry."

"Wait a little ; you shall have it presently."

Then the farmer took up a pine-faggot which was burning in the stove, as if pondering, and then ran out, and locked all the doors on the outside.

It was a cold autumn night. The wind whistled through the neighbouring pine forest with a strange sighing sound.

"Now you may burn and roast, you spirit of hell!" cried the farmer, and cast the fire on the thatch. Presently the whole house was wrapped in bright flames.

Then the farmer laughed madly, and kept on calling out, "Burn and roast!"

The light of the fire roused the people of the village, and they crowded round the ill-starred spot. They wished to put out the fire and save the house, but the farmer pushed them back, saying, "Let it be. What does the house matter, if *he* only perishes? He has tormented me long enough, and I will plague him now, and all may yet be well with me."

The people stared at him in amazement as he spoke. But now the house fell in crashing, and the farmer shouted, "Now he's burnt!"

At this moment the creature, visible only to the farmer, rose unhurt from the smoking ruins with a threatening gesture. As soon as the farmer saw him, he fell on the ground with a loud shriek.

"What do you see?" asked old Michel, who had just arrived on the scene, and stood by smiling.

But the farmer returned no answer. He had died of terror.

THE WOODEN MAN AND THE BIRCH-BARK MAID.

(KREUTZWALD.)

THIS is another story which relates how a stingy farmer starved all his servants, till no one would live with him. He applied to a sorcerer, who directed him to take a black hare in a bag to a cross-road for three Thursdays running, just before midnight, and whistle for the Devil. The farmer took a black cat instead, and on the third Thursday agreed with the Devil to receive a man-servant and a maid, who should work for him for twice seven years, and who would require no food, nothing but a little water. To ratify the bargain, the farmer gave the Devil

three drops of blood from his index-finger. At the end of the time the servants disappeared, and the farmer could only find a rotten stump and a heap of birch-bark, as their names signified (Puuläne and Tohtläne). Then the Devil seized the farmer by the throat and strangled him, and his wife could find no trace of him but three drops of blood, while all the corn-bins were empty, and the money-chest contained only withered birch-leaves.

A farmer who had unthinkingly devoted his lazy horse to the Devil, was much annoyed by three, who appeared successively, and demanded it. At last he was obliged to invite them to his Christmas-dinner, and to promise to feed them on blood, flesh, and corn. But a Finnish sorcerer taught him a charm by which he transformed them respectively into a bug, a wolf, and a rat.

Another story, in which the Devil gets the worst of it, is

THE COMPASSIONATE SHOEMAKER.

(JANNSEN.)

ONCE upon a time, when God himself was still on earth, it happened that he went to a farm-house disguised as a beggar,¹ while a christening was going forward, and asked for a lodging. But the people did not receive him, and declared that he might easily be trodden under the feet of the guests in the confusion. The poor man offered to creep under the stove, and lie still there; but they would not heed his prayer, and showed him the door, telling him he might go to the mud hovel, or wherever he liked.

In the hovel lived a shoemaker, who was always very compassionate towards the poor and needy, and would rather suffer hunger himself than allow

¹ This disguise is often assumed by God in the stories of Eastern Europe, when he wishes to be incognito; nor is it always clear whether God or Christ is intended. I remember once reading a Lithuanian story in which God and St. Peter are represented as descending to earth disguised as beggars, for fear they might be recognised, to inquire into the wickedness of mankind before the Flood.

a poor man to leave his threshold unrelieved. God went to him, and begged for a night's lodging. The shoemaker gave him a friendly reception and something to eat, and offered him his own bed, while he himself lay on straw.

Next morning, when God took his departure, he thanked his host, and said, "I am he who has power to fulfil whatsoever the heart can desire. You have given me a friendly and most hospitable reception and I am grateful to you from my heart, and will reward you. Speak a wish, and it shall be fulfilled."

The shoemaker answered, "Then I will wish that whenever a poor man comes to ask my aid, I may be able to give him what he most requires, and that I myself may never want for daily bread as long as I live."

"Let it be so!" answered God, who took leave of him and departed.

Meantime the people in the farmhouse were feasting and drinking, not remembering the proverbs, "A large piece strains the mouth," and "The mouth is the measure of the stomach." They set the house on fire by their recklessness, and only escaped with bare life. All their goods and chattels were reduced

to ashes, and they were left without a roof to shelter them. The guests hastened home, but the farmer and his people were forced to take refuge in the shoemaker's hut. He received them in the most friendly way, and gave them clothes and shoes, and food and drink, and saw to it that they wanted for nothing till they could again provide themselves with shelter.

Besides this, needy people came every day to the shoemaker, and each received an abundant allowance.

As he thus doled out everything, and refused no one relief, low people jeered at him, saying, "What is your object in giving everything away? You cannot make the world warm." He answered, "We should love our neighbours as ourselves."

At length the shoemaker felt that his last hour had come. So he dressed himself neatly, took with him a staff of juniper, and set off on the way to hell. The warden trembled when he saw him, and cried out, "Throw down the staff! No one may bring such a weapon to hell." The shoemaker took no heed of this speech, but pressed on his way. At length the Prince of Hell himself met him, and cried out, "Throw down your staff and let us wrestle. If you overcome me, I will be your

slave; but if I should overcome you, then you must serve me."

This did not please the shoemaker, who answered, "I will not wrestle with you, for you have such very clumsy hands, but come against me with a spear."

As the Devil continued talking, and again advised him to throw away the staff, the shoemaker struck him a heavy blow with it behind the ear. Upon this, all hell shook, and the Devil and his companions vanished suddenly, as lead sinks in water.

Then the shoemaker proceeded farther, and cautiously explored the interior of the underworld. In one hall lay a great book, in which the souls of all children who died unbaptized were recorded. Near the book lay many keys, which opened the rooms in which the children's souls were imprisoned. So he took the keys, released the innocent captive souls, and went with them to heaven, where he was received with honour, and a thanksgiving feast was instituted in remembrance of his good deed.

Among other stories of devils is one of a forester who gave the Devil three drops of blood for a magic powder which would heal all wounds. But when

he died, his corpse rushed out at the door, and was never seen again. Another time, a dull schoolboy, who was always beaten by his master, met the Devil, who drew blood from three punctures, and wrote a compact with it; but the boy was rescued by a clever student, who afterwards died from the bursting of the "blood-vessel of wisdom," as was ascertained by autopsy.

The Devil is sometimes represented as driving about in a coach drawn by twelve black stallions, and annoying the neighbourhood.

Another time, a charitable orphan-girl stayed late one Saturday evening in the bath-house,¹ after washing the poor and helpless, when the Devil and his mother and three sons drove up in a coach drawn by four black stallions, with harness adorned with gold and silver, and asked her hand for one of his sons. But the maiden fled back into the bath-house, after making the sign of the cross on the threshold, and replied that she was not ready, as she had no shoes nor dress. The Devil desired her to ask for whatever she wanted; but a mouse called to her to ask for each article separately.

¹ The bath is a special place of resort for devils in Mohammedan folk-lore.

One of the sons fetched each article as it was asked for ; and the maiden was at last fully attired, when the cock crew, and everything vanished. Next day the girl's mistress and her daughter were envious of her fine clothes and ornaments ; and next Saturday evening the daughter went to the bath-house. But she despised the warning of the mouse, and asked for everything at once, when she was taken into the coach and carried away.

Tales of minor dealings with the Devil are common. A farmer taking flax to market, invoked the Devil to enable him to sell it well. The Devil did so, and rode home with him from market, made him drunk, and tempted him to commit a burglary at the house of a rich man in the neighbourhood. He put his hat on the farmer's head, which made him invisible, and broke open the iron bars of the door with his teeth. On the way home, the farmer cried out, while crossing the ford where he had first met the Devil, "Good God ! how much money I've got !" The Devil vanished, and all the treasure fell into the stream, and was lost. On another occasion, a labourer devoted his horse to the Devil, at a time when an old Devil and his son overheard him. The son wanted to lay claim to it, but his father warned

him that it was no use, for such people did not mean what they said, and did not keep their word. Nevertheless, the imp went to unharness it, and the peasant in terror invoked the Trinity, when the imp ran away, and his father laughed at him.

The stories which follow, like several of the preceding, are mostly told by Jannsen, and deal with various forms of black magic. The first is an instance of something very like Vampirism.

MARTIN AND HIS DEAD MASTER.

MARTIN was a young fellow who was very fond of amusing himself with the girls, and often sat up talking and joking with them till very late in the evening. One Sunday, when he had slept very little the night before, he went to church, and there he fell asleep and did not awake till dark night. He rubbed his eyes, and could not imagine where he was, for the church was full of people, and they were all fine gentlemen. Martin looked about, and recognised among them his former master, who had been buried three months before. He also knew

him, and asked, "Well, Martin, when did you die?" "Three months after you were buried," answered Martin. "Oh, indeed," said the gentleman; "but what do you think? Shouldn't we go home now for a short visit? Won't you accompany me?" "I'm ready," said Martin, and he rose and followed his master. On the way he found a frozen glove, which he put in his pocket. They came to the mansion, and the master went first to the stable, for he intended to torment the horses, and thought Martin would help him. When the gentleman entered, the horses made no sound, but when Martin came in, they neighed. The master turned round and said, "Listen, Martin! you can't be really dead. Give me your hand to feel." Martin thrust his hand into the frozen glove which he had found on the road, and extended it to his master, who said, "Yes, you are really dead; your hand is shockingly cold." Then he tormented the horses till they were covered with white foam. Martin was sorry, but could do nothing but stand and look on. At last the master ceased his spiteful work, and said, "Let us go into the house. Go you into the kitchen and frighten the maids, and I will torment the lady. When it is time to depart, I will come for you."

The lady screamed and sobbed with terror as if she was mad, and the maids screamed too, but with fun and frolic.

After a long time, the master came to the kitchen, and said, "Come, Martin, let us make haste, for the cocks will soon crow." He would have liked to have run away, but he was too much afraid, so he went with his master. On the way his master talked a great deal to him about how his wife had searched everywhere for the treasure which he had hidden before his death, and what she had done to banish the nightly hauntings, but everything was useless. "Yes," said Martin, "it must be a great sorcerer who can lay spectres and discover treasures in the ground. Perhaps she will never meet with one."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the gentleman, "no great cleverness is needed. If a living person was to stamp three times on my grave with his left heel, and say each time, 'Here shall you lie,' I couldn't get out again. But the money which I hid in my lifetime is under the floor of my bedroom, near the stove."

Martin was delighted to hear this, and would have shouted for joy, but he thought it too dangerous.

They now came to the churchyard, and the gentleman asked Martin to show him his grave. But Martin said, "We shall have another opportunity, I'm afraid the cocks are just about to crow." The gentleman slipped quickly into his grave, when Martin stamped three times with his left heel on the mound, and said three times, "Here shall you lie."

"Oh, you liar and scoundrel!" cried the dead man from the grave; "if I had known that you were still alive, I should have crushed and mangled you. Now I can do nothing more to you."

Then Martin returned home full of joy, and told the lady all that he had seen and heard and done. The lady did not know how to thank him enough. She took him as her husband, and they lived together happily and honourably; and if they could have got on as well with Death as with the nocturnal spectre, they might be living still.

Free-shooters, so well known in Germany, are not unknown in Esthonia. In the story of the "Hunter's Lost Luck" (Kreutzwald), we find a hunter whose usual skill had deserted him selling himself to the Devil with three drops of blood for a magic

bullet which should kill the author of his bad luck. His good luck depended on his not shooting at the leader of a flock or herd ; but one evening, having drunk too much, he fired at the leader of a troop of foxes, and fell down dead. The villagers took his body home ; but when he was put into the coffin, a great black cat, which was supposed to be the Old Boy himself, carried him away.

The story of "The Coiners of Leal" relates to the ruins of an old castle, which was said to be haunted by a hell-hound.¹ One night a young nobleman set out to explore it, and was warned off by a tall man in black clothes, but, on advancing, sank into the vaults, where he found a number of men coining gold and silver. They bound him by an oath of secrecy as to their proceedings, warning him that if he broke it, their master, the dog, would fetch him, and make him coin gold and silver for ever with them ; and he received a sackful of treasure to remind him of his oath. Some years after, he drank too much at a feast, told his story, and immediately disappeared, and was never seen again.

¹ The Manx story will occur to the reader. Compare also the story of the "Courageous Barn-keeper" in the following section of our work.

THE BEWITCHED HORSE.

A FARMER'S old horse had died, so he skinned it, and threw it behind the threshing-floor, intending to bury it next day. He saw a great toad creep under it as he went away. At night he went into the barn to sleep, and hearing a noise outside, kept watch for thieves; but, to his horror, he saw the door slowly open, and his dead horse enter. The horse came in snuffling and snorting, and broke down several of the posts that supported the loft where his master had been sleeping; but the farmer contrived to scramble into the rafters. At last the cock crew, when the horse fell down like a lump of meat, and the farmer too lost his hold and fell upon him. Next morning the farmer buried the horse, and stamped three times with his left heel on the grave; so the horse remained quiet.

But it was a sorcerer who had a grudge against the farmer who had sent the toad into the carcass of the horse.

SECTION IX

HIDDEN TREASURES

IN Esthonia, as elsewhere, we meet with many stories of hidden treasures, frequently in connection with devils, and hence we place this section next to the Devil-stories. The stories of "The Courageous Barn-keeper" and of the "Gallows Dwarfs" are curious and interesting; those which follow are given here only in abstract. In all countries which have been devastated by war, traditions of hidden treasure are common. I remember once reading a story in a newspaper (but I do not know if the report was true) of a quantity of coins of Edward the Confessor and Harold being dug up in a field respecting which there was a tradition in the neighbourhood that a great treasure was concealed in it. In Esthonian as well as in Oriental tales, hidden treasures are usually under the care of non-human guardians, even when it is not said that they were specially placed under their protection. This notion

probably persists in many countries to the present day. It is said that when Kidd, the famous pirate, buried a hoard of treasure, he used to slaughter a negro at the place, that the ghost might guard it. Stories of his hidden treasure (more or less probable) are still rife in America.

THE COURAGEOUS BARN-KEEPER.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time there lived a barn-keeper who had few to equal him in courage. The Old Boy himself admitted that a bolder man had never yet appeared on earth. In the evening, when the threshers were no longer at work in the barn, he often paid a visit to the barn-keeper, and never tired of talking with him. He was under the impression that the barn-keeper did not recognise him, and supposed him to be only an ordinary peasant; but his host knew him well enough, though he pretended not, and had made up his mind to box Old Hornie's ears if he could. One evening the Old Boy began to complain of the hard life of a bachelor, and how he had nobody to knit him a

pair of stockings or to hem a handkerchief. The barn-keeper answered, "Why don't you go a-wooing, my brother?" The Old Boy returned, "I've tried my luck often enough, but the girls won't have me. The younger and prettier they are, the more they laugh at me."

The barn-keeper advised him to court old maids or widows, who would be much easier to win, and who would not be so likely to despise a suitor. The Old Boy took his advice, and some weeks afterwards married an old maid; but it was not long before he came back to the barn-keeper to complain of his troubles. His newly-married wife was full of tricks; she left him no rest night or day, and tormented him continually. "What sort of a man are you," laughed the barn-keeper, "to allow your wife to wear the trousers? If you marry a wife, you must take care to be master." The Old Boy answered, "I couldn't manage her. If she chose to bring anybody else into the house, I couldn't venture to set foot in it." The barn-keeper sought to comfort him, and advised him to try his luck elsewhere; but the Old Boy thought that the first trial was enough, and had no inclination to put his neck under a woman's yoke again.

In the autumn of the following year, when threshing had begun again, the old acquaintance of the barn-keeper paid him another visit. The latter saw that the peasant had something on his mind, but he asked no questions, thinking it best to wait till the other broached the matter himself. He had not long to wait before he heard all the old fellow's misfortunes. During the summer he had made the acquaintance of a young widow who cooed like a dove, so that the little man again thought of courtship. In short, he married her, but discovered afterwards that she was a shocking scold at home, who would gladly have scratched his eyes out of his head, and he had cause to thank his stars that he had escaped from her hands. The barn-keeper remarked, "I see you're good for nothing as a husband, for you are chicken-hearted, and don't know how to manage a wife." The Old Boy was forced to acknowledge that it was true. After they had talked awhile about women and marriage, the Old Boy said, "If you are really such a bold man as you pretend, and could tame the most hellish¹ woman that exists, I will show you a way by which you can turn your courage to better

¹ *Pörgulise* is the actual word used here.

account than by subduing a violent woman. Do you know the ruins of the old castle on the mountain? A great treasure lies there since ancient times, which no one has been able to get at, just because nobody has had enough courage to dig it up." The barn-keeper said, smiling, "If nothing more is needed than courage, the treasure is already as good as in my pocket." Then the Old Boy told him that he must go to dig up the treasure next Thursday night, when the moon would be full; but added, "Take good care that you are not a bit afraid, for if your heart fails you, or if only a muscle of your body trembles, you will not only lose the expected treasure, but may even lose your life, like many others who have tried their luck before you. If you don't believe me, you may go into any farmhouse, and the people will tell you what they have heard about the walls of the old castle. Many people even profess to have seen something with their own eyes. But once more, if you value your life, and wish to possess the treasure, beware of all fear."

On the morning of the appointed Thursday, the barn-keeper set out, and although he did not feel the slightest fear, he turned into the village inn,

hoping to find somebody there who could give him some kind of information about the ruins of the old castle. He asked the landlord what the old ruins on the hill were, and whether people knew anything about who built them, and who destroyed them. An old farmer, who overheard the question, gave him the following information: "The report goes that a very rich squire lived there many centuries ago, who was lord over vast territories and a great population. This lord ruled with an iron hand, and treated his subjects with great severity, but he had amassed vast wealth by their sweat and blood, and gold and silver poured into his castle on all sides in hogsheads. Here he stored his wealth in deep cellars, where it was secure from thieves and robbers. No one knows how the wealthy miscreant came to his end. One morning the attendants found his bed empty and three drops of blood on the floor. A great black cat, which was never seen before or afterwards, was sitting on the canopy of the bed. It is supposed that this cat was the Evil Spirit¹ himself, who had

¹ This term, *kuri vaim*, is explicitly used here, not *Vana pois*, as we find in the earlier part of the story; and seems to indicate a different and much more malevolent being than the simpleton who visited the barn-keeper, though the term *Vana pois* sometimes occurs

strangled the squire in his bed in this form, and had then carried him off to Põrgu to expiate his crimes. As soon as the relatives of the squire heard of his death, they wished to secure his treasures, but not a single copeck was to be found. It was at first thought that the servants had stolen it, and they were brought to trial; but as they knew that they were innocent, nothing could be extracted from them, even under the torture. In the meantime, many people heard a chinking like money deep under ground at night, and informed the authorities; and as this was investigated and the report confirmed, the servants were set at liberty. The strange nocturnal chinking was often heard afterwards, and many people dug for the treasure, but nothing was discovered, and no one returned from the caverns under the castle, for they were doubtless seized upon by the same power which had brought the owner of the money to such a dreadful end. Every one saw that there was something uncanny about it, and no one dared to live in the old castle. At length the roof and walls fell in from long exposure to rain and wind, and nothing was left

in stories like "The Wooden Man and Birch-bark Maid," in which souls are actually sold to the Devil.

but an old ruin. No one dares to spend the night near it, and still less would any one be rash enough to seek for the ancient treasure there." So said the old farmer.

When the barn-keeper had heard the story, he said, half joking, "I should like to try my luck. Who'll go with me to-morrow night?" The men made the sign of the cross, and declared that their lives were more to them than all the treasures in the world, and that no one could reach these treasures without losing his soul. Then they begged the stranger to recall his words, and not to pledge himself to the Evil One. But the bold barn-keeper gave no heed to their entreaties and expostulations, and resolved to attempt the adventure alone. In the evening he asked the host for a bundle of pine-splinters, that he might not be in the dark, and then inquired the nearest way to the ruins.

One of the peasants, who seemed to be a little bolder than the others, went with him for some distance as his guide with a lighted lantern. As the sky was cloudy, and it was quite dark, the barn-keeper was obliged to grope his way. The whistling of the wind and the screeching of the owls

were terrible to hear, but could not frighten his bold heart. As soon as he was able to strike a light under the shelter of the masonry, he lit a splinter and looked about for a door or an opening through which he could get down underground. After looking about fruitlessly for some time, at last he discovered a hole at the foot of the wall, which seemed to lead downwards. He put the burning splinter in a crack in the wall, and cleared out so much earth and rubbish with his hands that he could creep through. After he had gone some distance, he came to a flight of stone stairs, and there was now room enough for him to stand upright. He descended the stairs with his bundle of splinters on his shoulder and one burning in his hand, and at last reached an iron door, which was not locked. He pushed the heavy door open, and was about to enter, when a large black cat with fiery eyes dashed through the door like the wind and rushed up the stairs. The barn-keeper thought, "That must be what strangled the lord of the castle;" so he pushed the door to, threw down the bundle of splinters, and then examined the place more carefully. It was a great wide hall, with doors everywhere in the walls; he

counted twelve, and considered which he should try first. "Seven's a lucky number," said he, so he counted till he came to the seventh door, but it was locked, and would not yield. But when he pushed at the door with all his strength, the rusty lock gave way and the door flew open. When the barn-keeper entered, he found a room of moderate size; on one side stood a table and bench, and at the opposite wall was a stove, with a bundle of faggots lying on the ground near the hearth. The inspector then lit a fire, and by its light he found a small pot and a cup of flour standing on the stove, and some salt in a salt-cellar. "Look here!" cried the barn-keeper. "Here I find something to eat unexpectedly; I have some water with me in my flask, and can cook some warm porridge." So he set the pot on the fire, put some flour and water into it, added some salt, stirred it with a splinter of wood, and boiled his porridge well, after which he poured it into the cup, and set it on the table. The bright fire lit up the room, and he did not need to light a splinter. The bold barn-keeper seated himself at the table, took the spoon, and began to eat the warm porridge. All at once he looked up and saw the black

cat with the fiery eyes sitting on the stove. He could not comprehend how the beast had come there, as he had seen it running up the stairs with his own eyes. After this, three loud knocks were struck on the door, till the walls and floor shook. The barn-keeper did not lose his presence of mind, but cried out loudly, "Let anybody enter who has a head on his shoulders!" Immediately the door flew wide open, and the black cat sprang from the stove and darted through, while sparks of fire flew from its eyes and mouth. As soon as the cat had disappeared, four tall men entered, clad in long white coats, and wearing caps of flame-colour, which shone so brightly that the room became as bright as day. The men carried a bier on their shoulders, and a coffin stood upon it, but still the bold barn-keeper did not feel the least bit afraid. The men set the coffin on the ground without speaking a word, and then one after another went out at the door, and closed it behind them. The cat whined and scratched at the door, as if it wanted to get in, but the barn-keeper did not concern himself, and only ate his warm porridge. When he had eaten enough, he stood up, and looked at the coffin. He broke open the lid, and beneath it

he beheld a little man with a long white beard. The barn-keeper lifted him out, and carried him to the fire to warm him. It was not long before the little old man began to revive, and to move his hands and feet. The bold barn-keeper was not a bit afraid; he took the porridge-pot and the spoon from the table, and began to feed the old man. The latter said presently, "Thank you, my son, for taking pity on such a poor creature as I am, and reviving my body, which was stiff with cold and hunger. I will give you such a princely reward for your good deed that you shall not forget me as long as you live. Behind the stove you will find some pitch-torches, light one and come with me. But first make the door securely fast, that the furious cat may not get in to break your neck. We will afterwards make it so tame that it cannot hurt anybody again."

As he spoke, the old man raised a square trap-door about three feet broad from the floor, and it was plain that the stone covered the entrance to a cellar. The old man went down the steps first, and the barn-keeper followed him with the torch till they reached a terribly deep cavern.

In this great cellar-like arched cavern lay an

enormous heap of money, as big as the largest hay-cock, half silver and half gold. The little old man took from a cupboard in the wall a handful of wax-candles, three bottles of wine, a smoked ham, and a loaf of bread. Then he said to the barn-keeper, "I give you three days' time to count and sort this heap. You must divide the heap into two equal parts, exactly alike, and so that nothing remains over. While you are busy with this, I will lie down by the wall to sleep, but take care not to make the least mistake or I'll strangle you."

The barn-keeper at once set to work, and the old man lay down. In order to guard against any mistake, the barn-keeper always took two similar coins to divide, whether thalers or roubles, gold or silver, and he laid one on his right, and the other on his left, to form two heaps. When he found his strength failing, he took a pull at one of the bottles, ate some bread and meat, and then set to work with renewed strength. As he only allowed himself a short sleep at night, in order to get on with his work, he had already finished the sorting on the evening of the second day, but one small piece of silver remained over. What was to be done? This did not trouble the bold barn-keeper; he drew his

knife from his pocket, laid the blade on the middle of the coin, and struck the back of the knife so hard with a stone that the coin was split in two halves. One half he laid to the right heap, and the other to the left, after which he roused up the old man, and asked him to inspect the work. When the old man saw the two halves of the last coin lying on the heap to the right and left, he uttered a cry of joy, and fell on the neck of the barn-keeper, stroked his cheeks, and at last exclaimed, "A thousand and again a thousand thanks to you, brave youth, for releasing me from my long, long captivity. I have been obliged to watch over my treasure here for many hundred years, because there was no one who had sufficient courage or sense to divide the money so that nothing was left over. I was therefore forced by a binding oath to strangle one after another, and as no one returned, for the last two hundred years no one has dared to come here, though there was not a night which I allowed to pass without jingling the money. But it was destined for you, O child of good luck! to become my deliverer, after I had almost abandoned all hope, and fancied myself doomed to eternal imprisonment. Thanks, a thousand thanks, for your good deed!

Take now one of these heaps of money as the reward for your trouble, but the other you must divide among the poor, as an atonement for my grievous sins; for when I lived on earth in this castle I was a great libertine and scoundrel. You have still to accomplish one task for my benefit, and for your own. When you go upstairs again, and you meet the great black cat on the stairs, seize it and hang it up. Here is a noose from which it cannot escape again."

Hereupon he took from his bosom a chain woven of fine gold thread, as thick as a shoe-string, which he handed to the barn-keeper, and then vanished, as if he had sunk into the ground. A tremendous crash followed, as if the earth had cloven asunder beneath the barn-keeper's feet. The light went out, and he found himself in thick darkness, but even this unexpected event did not shake his courage. He contrived to grope his way till he came to the stairs, which he ascended till he reached the first room, where he had boiled his porridge. The fire in the hearth had long been extinguished, but he found some sparks among the ashes, which he succeeded in blowing into a flame. The coffin was still standing on the ground, but instead of

the old man, the great black cat was sleeping in it. The barn-keeper seized it by the head, slipped the gold chain round its neck, hung it on a strong iron nail in the wall, and then laid down on the floor to rest.

Next morning he made his way out of the ruins, and took the nearest path to the inn from whence he had started. When the host saw that the stranger had escaped unhurt, his joy and astonishment knew no bounds. But the barn-keeper said, "Get me a few dozen sacks to hold a ton, for which I will pay well, and hire horses, so that I can fetch away my treasure." Then the host perceived that the stranger's expedition had not been fruitless, and he immediately fulfilled the rich man's orders.

When the barn-keeper learned from the people what part of the old man's domains was formerly under the authority of the lord of the castle, he assigned one-third of the money destined for the poor to this district, handed over the remaining two-thirds to the local authorities for distribution, and settled himself with his own money in a distant country, where nobody knew him. His descendants live there as rich people to this day, and

extol the bravery of their ancestor, who carried off the treasure.

THE GALLOWS-DWARFS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONCE upon a time a parson was looking out for a servant who would undertake to toll the church bell at midnight in addition to his other duties. Many men had already made the attempt, but whenever they went to toll the bell at night, they disappeared as suddenly as if they had sunk into the ground, for the bell was not heard to toll, and the bell-ringer never came back. The parson kept the matter as quiet as possible, but the sudden disappearance of so many men could not be concealed, and he could no longer find anybody willing to enter his service.

The more the matter was talked about, the more seriously it was discussed, and there were even malicious tongues to whisper that the parson himself murdered his servants. Every Sunday the parson proclaimed from the pulpit after the sermon, "I am in want of a good servant, and offer double

wages, good keep," &c.; but for many months no one applied for the post. However, one day the crafty Hans¹ offered his services. He had been last in the employment of a stingy master, and the offer of good keep was therefore very attractive to him, and he was quite ready to enter on his duties at once. "Very well, my son," said the parson, "if you are armed with courage and trust in God, you may make your first trial to-night, and we will conclude our bargain to-morrow."

Hans was quite content, and went into the servants' room without troubling his head about his new employment. The parson was a miser, and was always vexed when his servants ate too much, and generally came into the room during their meals, hoping that they would eat less in his presence. He also encouraged them to drink as much as possible, thinking that the more they drank, the less they would be able to eat. But Hans was more cunning than his master, for he emptied the jug at one draught, saying, "That makes twice as much room for the food." The parson thought this was really the case, and no longer urged his

¹ Hans is a generic term in Esthonia for the cunning fellow who always contrives to outwit the Devil, &c.

people to drink, while Hans laughed in his sleeve at the success of his trick.

It was about eleven o'clock at night when Hans entered the church. He found the interior lighted up, and was rather surprised when he saw a numerous company, who were not assembled for purposes of devotion. The people were sitting at a long table playing cards. But Hans was not a bit frightened, or, if he secretly felt a little alarm, he was cunning enough to show nothing of it. He went straight to the table and sat down with the players. One of them noticed him, and said, "Friend, what business have you here?" Hans gave him a good stare, and presently answered, "It would be better for a meddler like you to hold his tongue. If anybody here has a right to ask questions, I think I'm the man. But if I don't care to avail myself of my right, I certainly think it would be more polite of you to hold your jaw." Hans then took up the cards, and began to play with the strangers as if they were his best friends. He had good luck, for he doubled his stakes, and emptied the pockets of many of the other players. Presently the cock crew. Midnight must have come; and in a moment the lights were extinguished,

and the players, with their table and benches, vanished. Hans groped about in the dark church for some time before he could find the door which led to the belfry.

When Hans had nearly reached the top of the first flight, he saw a little man without a head sitting on the top step. "Oho, my little fellow! what do you want here?" cried Hans, and, without waiting for an answer, he gave him a good kick and sent him rolling down the long flight of stairs. He found the same kind of little sentinel posted on the top stair of the second, third, and fourth flights, and pitched them down one after another, so that all the bones in their bodies rattled.

At last Hans reached the bell without further hindrance. When he looked up, to make sure that all was right, he saw another headless little man sitting crouched together in the bell. He had loosened the clapper, and seemed to be waiting for Hans to pull the bell-rope, to drop the heavy clapper on his head, which would certainly have killed him. "Wait a while, my little friend," cried Hans; "we haven't bargained for this. You may have seen how I rolled your little comrades down-stairs without tiring their own legs! You your-

self shall follow them. But because you sit the highest, you shall make the proudest journey. I'll pitch you out of the loophole, so that you'll have no wish to come back again."

As he spoke, he raised the ladder, intending to drag the little man out of the bell and fulfil his threat. The dwarf saw his danger, and began to beg, "Dear brother, spare my wretched life, and I promise that neither my brothers nor I will again interfere with the bellringer at night. I may seem small and contemptible, but who knows whether I may not some day be able to do more for your welfare than offer you a beggar's thanks?"

"Poor little fellow!" laughed Hans. "Your ransom wouldn't be worth a gnat. But as I'm in a good humour just now, I'm willing to spare your life. But take care not to come in my way again, for I might not be inclined to trifle with you another time."

The headless dwarf gave him his humble thanks, clambered down the bell-rope like a squirrel, and bolted down the belfry-stairs as if he was on fire, while Hans tolled the bell to his heart's content.

When the parson heard the bell tolling at midnight he was surprised and pleased at having at last found a servant who had withstood the ordeal.

After Hans had finished his work he went into the hayloft, and lay down to sleep.

The parson was in the habit of getting up early in the morning, and going to see whether his people were about their work. All were in their places except the new servant, and nobody had seen anything of him. When eleven o'clock came, and Hans still made no appearance, the parson became anxious, and began to fear that the bell-ringer had met his death like those before him. But when the rattle was used to call the workmen to dinner, Hans likewise appeared among them.

"Where have you been all morning?" asked the parson.

"I've been asleep," answered Hans, yawning.

"Asleep?" cried the parson in amazement. "You don't mean that you sleep every day till this hour?"

"I think," answered Hans, "it's as clear as spring-water. Nobody can serve two masters. He who works at night must sleep during the day, for night was meant for labourers to rest. If you relieve me from tolling the bell at night, I'm quite ready to set to work at daybreak. But if I have to toll the bell at night, I must sleep in the daytime, at any rate till mid-day."

After disputing over the matter for some time, they finally agreed on the following conditions:—Hans was to be relieved of his nocturnal duties, and was to work from sunrise to sunset. He was to be allowed to sleep for half-an-hour after nine o'clock in the morning, and for a whole hour after dinner, and was to have the whole of Sunday free. "But," said the parson, "you might sometimes help with odd jobs at other times, especially in winter, when the days are short, and the work would then last longer."

"Not at all," cried Hans, "for that's why the days are longer in summer. I won't do any more than work from sunrise to sunset on week-days, as I promised."

Some time afterwards the parson was asked to attend a grand christening in town. The town was only a few hours from the parsonage, but Hans took a bag of provisions with him. "What's that for?" said the parson. "We shall get to town before evening." But Hans answered, "Who can foresee everything? Many things may happen on the road to interfere with our journey, and you know that our bargain was that I am only obliged to serve you till sunset. If the sun sets before we reach town, you'll have to finish your journey alone."

They were in the middle of the forest when the sun set. Hans stopped the horses, took up his provision-bag, and jumped out of the sledge. "What are you doing, Hans? Are you mad?" asked the pastor of souls. But Hans answered quietly, "I'm going to sleep here; for the sun has set, and my time of work is over." His master did his utmost to move him with alternate threats and entreaties, but it was all of no use, and at last he promised him a good present and an increase in his wages. "Are you not ashamed, Mr. Parson?" said Hans. "Would you tempt me to stray from the right way and break my agreement? All the treasures of the earth would not induce me, for you hold a man by his word, and an ox by his horns. If you want to go to town to-night, travel on alone, in God's name; for I can't go any farther with you, now that my hours of service have expired."

"But, my good Hans, my dear fellow," said the parson, "I really can't leave you here all alone by yourself. Don't you see the gallows close by, with two evil-doers hanging on it, whose souls are now burning in hell? Surely you wouldn't venture to pass the night in the neighbourhood of such company?"

"Why not?" said Hans. "These gallows-birds are hanging up in the air, and I shall sleep on the ground below, so we can't interfere with each other." As he spoke he turned his back to his master and went off with his provision-bag.

If the parson would not miss the christening, it was necessary for him to go to town alone. The people were much astonished to see him arrive without a coachman; but when he had related his astonishing altercation with Hans, they could not make up their minds whether the master or the servant was the biggest fool of the two.

Hans cared nothing about what the people thought or said of him. He ate his supper, lit himself a pipe to warm his nose, made himself a bed under a great branching pine-tree, wrapped himself in his warm rug, and went to sleep. He might have slept for some hours when he was roused by a sudden noise. It was a bright moonlight night, and close by stood two headless dwarfs under the pine-tree exchanging angry words. Hans raised himself to look at them better, when they both cried out at once, "It is he! it is he!" One of them drew nearer to Hans' sleeping place and said, "Old friend, we have met again by a lucky chance. My bones still

ache from the steps in the church tower, and I dare say you haven't forgotten the story. We'll deal with your bones now in such a fashion that you won't forget our meeting for weeks. Hi! there, comrades; come on and set to work!"

Upon this a crowd of the headless dwarfs rushed together from all sides like a swarm of gnats. They were all armed with thick cudgels, bigger than themselves. The number of these little enemies threatened danger, for they struck as hard as any strong man could have done. Hans thought his last hour was come, for he could not make any defence against such a host of enemies. But by good luck another dwarf made his appearance, just as the blows were falling fastest. "Stop, stop, comrades!" he exclaimed. "This man has been my benefactor, and I owe him a debt of gratitude. He gave me my life when I was in his power. Although he pitched some of you downstairs, he didn't cripple any of you. The warm bath cured your broken limbs long ago, and you had better forgive him and go home."

The headless dwarfs were easily persuaded by their comrade, and went quietly away. Hans now recognised his deliverer as the apparition who had sat in the church-bell at night. The dwarf sat down

with Hans under the pine-tree, and said, "You laughed at me once when I said that a time might come in which I might be useful to you. That time has now arrived, and let it teach you not to despise even the smallest creature in the world." "I thank you with all my heart," returned Hans. "My bones are almost pulverised with their blows, and I should hardly have escaped with life if you had not arrived in the very nick of time."

The headless dwarf continued, "My debt is now paid, but I will do more, and give you something to indemnify you for your thrashing. You need no longer toil in the service of a stingy parson. When you reach home to-morrow go straight to the north corner of the church, where you will find a great stone fixed in the wall, which is not secured with mortar like the others. It is full moon on the night of the day after to-morrow. Go at midnight, and take this stone out of the wall with a lever. Under the stone you will find an inestimable treasure, which many generations have heaped together; there are gold and silver church plate, and a large amount of money, which was once concealed in time of war. Those who hid the treasure have all died more than a hundred years ago, and not a living

soul knows anything about the matter. You must divide one-third of the money among the poor of the parish, and all the rest is yours, to do what you like with." At this moment a cock crew in a distant village, and the headless dwarf vanished as if he had been wiped out.

Hans could not sleep for a long time for the pain in his limbs, and thought much of the hidden treasure, but he dropped asleep at last towards morning.

The sun was high in the heavens when his master returned from town. "Hans," said the parson, "you were a great fool not to go with me yesterday. Look here! I've had plenty to eat and drink, and got money in my pocket into the bargain." Meantime he jingled the money to vex him more. But Hans answered quietly, "Worthy Mister Parson, you have had to keep awake all night for that bit of money, but I've earned a hundred times as much in my sleep." "Show me what you earned," cried the parson. But Hans answered, "Fools jingle their copecks, but wise men hide their roubles."

When they reached home, Hans did his duty zealously, unharnessed and fed the horses, and then walked round the church till he found the stone in the wall that was not mortared.

On the first night after the full moon, when everybody else was asleep, Hans crept quietly out of the house with a pickaxe, wrenched out the stone with much difficulty, and actually found the hole with the money, just as the dwarf had described it to him. Next Sunday he divided the third part among the poor of the parish, and gave notice to the parson that he was about to quit his service, and as he asked no wages for so short a time, he got his discharge without any demur. But Hans travelled a long way off, bought himself a nice farmhouse, married a young wife, and lived quietly and comfortably for many years.

At the time when my grandfather was a shepherd-boy, there were many old people living in our village who had known Hans, and who bore witness to the truth of this story.

THE TREASURE AT KERTELL.

(JANNSEN.)

DURING a great war, the people of Kertell, in the island of Dagö, caused a great iron chest to be made,

wherein they stored all their gold and silver, and sunk it in the river near the old bridge. But they all perished without recovering it. Many years afterwards, a man who was passing by in the evening saw a small flame flickering in the air. He laid his pipe on a stone and followed the flame; but it disappeared, and on going to pick up his pipe, he found it gone, and money lying on the stone. But afterwards, whenever he passed the stone, he found money. His companions advised him to consult a magician with respect to raising the treasure, of which the tradition had persisted; and the magician directed him to go to the place where he had seen the flame on three successive Thursdays, and sacrifice a cock, but not to speak of it to any one.¹ On the third Thursday, he took some companions with him; and when the cock was sacrificed, the treasure-chest appeared above water, and they dragged it to shore with great labour. But one of the party looked towards the bridge, and saw a little boy mounted on a pig riding over it. He exclaimed to his companions, when the figures disappeared, the stakes and ropes gave way, and the treasure fell

¹ This seems to be an error in the story; for the context shows that the prohibition was not to speak a word during the ceremony.

back into the river, and was irrecoverably lost to them.

THE GOLDEN SNAKES.

(JANNSEN.)

TWO woodcutters found a number of snakes in the wood, and one of the men killed some, and he and his comrade followed them up till they came to a vast mass of snakes, among which was one with a golden crown. They fled, but were pursued by the snake-king, when one of them turned round and hit him on the head with an axe, when he changed into a heap of gold. They then returned to the cluster of snakes, but they had all disappeared, and they found only another heap of gold. They divided the money, and with half of it they built a church.

The previous story is Lithuanian rather than Esthonian in character. The next has a more diabolical character than any of the preceding.

THE DEVIL'S TREASURE.

(JANNSEN.)

A TRAVELLING Swedish shoemaker saw a fire burning one night on the Sand Mountain, and on reaching the spot, found an iron chest, which he opened, and finding it to contain a pot of gold, helped himself to a good supply. He then left his situation, and wandered about till he came to Ringen, where he was appointed shoemaker to the castle. One evening he was alone in his room when he heard a horn blown twice, but each time he went out and found nothing. He then took his prayer-book in his hand, ate his supper, and went to bed, but was awakened by a tremendous noise in the castle. On opening his eyes, he saw that his room was lit up with tapers, and two women, one in a red and the other in a green dress, stood by his bed, who invited him to dance. Half asleep, he cried out, "To hell with you! Is this a time to dance?" They reminded him of the money which he had taken, left the room, and banged the door after them,

so that the whole castle shook. The lights went out, and the shoemaker turned over and went to sleep again. Next morning he found himself lying terribly bruised, with his head and body in the hall, and his legs in the room. On his breast were the impress of two hands, showing prints of all the fingers. Shortly afterwards he died, having confessed to the priest, and left all his money for a church-bell. The chest was found empty, the demons having carried off their treasure again; but the shoemaker was buried under the pulpit in the church at Ringen.

We may end this section with the story of a man who failed to raise a treasure through fear.

THE NOCTURNAL CHURCH-GOERS.

(KREUTZWALD.)

ONE Christmas Eve the people at a farm-house a couple of versts from a church went to bed early, intending to go to early morning service by candle-light. The farmer woke up, and on going out to see

how the weather was, he saw the church lit up, and thinking he had overslept himself, called his people and they set out. They found the church lit up and full of people, but the singing sounded rather strange. When they reached the open door, the lights and people disappeared, and a stranger came out, who told them to return, saying, "This is our service; yours begins to-morrow." But he took one youth of the party aside, and told him to come again at midnight three days before St. John's Eve and he would make his fortune, but he warned him to keep it secret.

As the party returned to the farm-house, the sky cleared, and they saw from the position of the stars that it was midnight. When the matter came to the pastor's ears, he tried to persuade the people that it was only a dream; but the matter could not be hushed up.

The youth who had received an invitation from the stranger felt very doubtful about keeping the appointment, especially as he had been commanded to keep it secret; but a fortnight before the time, he was going home one evening after sunset, when he saw an old woman sitting by the roadside, who asked him what he was thinking about so deeply,

He made no answer, and then she asked to see his hand to tell his fortune, assuring him that she meant him well. She put on her spectacles, and after examining his hand for some time, promised him great good fortune, and told him to go with the stranger without fear. But if he wished to take a wife, let him not do so without great consideration, or he might fall into misfortune. She refused any payment, and hurried away as lightly as a young girl.

Three days before St. John's Eve, the youth set out a little before midnight. A voice cried in his ear, "You are not going right!" and he was about to turn back when he heard voices singing in the air, which urged him not to throw away his good fortune, and encouraged him to proceed. He found the church-door closed, but the stranger came from behind the left side of the church. He told the youth he feared he might not have come; and that the church service was held at Christmas only once in seven years, at a time when men are all asleep. The stranger then told the youth that there was a grave mound in a certain meadow on which grew three junipers, and under the middle one a great treasure was buried. In order to propitiate the

guardians of the treasure, it was needful to slaughter three black animals, one feathered and two hairy, and to take care that not a drop of the sacrificial blood was lost, but all offered to the guardians. A bit of silver was to be scraped from the youth's buckle that the gleam of the costly silver might lead him to that which was buried. "Then cut a stick from the juniper three spans long, turn the point three times toward the grass where you have offered the blood, and walk nine times round the juniper bush from west to east. But at every round strike the grass under the bush three times with the stick, and at every blow say 'Igrek!'"¹ At the eighth round you will perceive a subterranean jingling of money, and after the ninth round you will see the gleam of silver. Then fall on your knees, bend your face to the ground, and cry out nine times 'Igrek,' when the treasure will rise." The seeker must wait patiently till the treasure has risen, and not allow himself to be frightened by the spectres which would appear, for they were only soulless phantoms,² to try the seeker's courage. If it failed, he would return home with empty hands.

¹ *Kergi* (rise up), spelt backwards.

² As in the story of Joodar (*Thousand and One Nights*).

The seeker must go to the hill on St. John's Eve, when the bonfires were burning and the people merrymaking. A third of the treasure was to be given to the poor; the rest belonged to the finder.

The stranger repeated his directions three times word for word that the youth should not forget them, when the sexton's cock crew and the stranger vanished suddenly.

Next day the youth obtained a black cock and a black dog from some neighbours, and next night he caught a mole. On St. John's Eve he took the three animals, and carried out his instructions at midnight, slaughtering first the cock, then the mole, and lastly the dog, taking care that every drop of blood should fall on the appointed spot. But when he had called "Igrek!" at the conclusion of the ceremony, a fiery-red cock rose suddenly under the juniper, flapped his wings, crowed and flew away. A shovelful of silver was then cast up at the youth's feet. Next a fiery-red cat with long golden claws rose from under the juniper, mewed, and darted away, when the earth opened and threw up another shovelful of silver. Next appeared a great fiery-red dog, with a golden head and tail, who barked, and ran away, when a shovelful of roubles was cast

up at the youth's feet. This was followed by a red fox with a golden tail, a red wolf with two golden heads, and a red bear with three golden heads ; and behind each animal money was thrown out in the grass, but behind the bear there came about a ton of silver, and the entire heap rose to the height of a haycock. When the bear had disappeared, there was a rushing and roaring under the juniper as if fifty smiths were blowing the bellows at once. Then appeared from the juniper a huge head, half man, half beast, with golden horns nine feet long, and with golden tusks two ells long. Still more dreadful were the flames which shot from mouth and nostrils, and which caused the rushing and roaring. The youth was now beside himself with terror, and rushed away, fancying himself closely pursued by the spectre, and at last he fell down in his own farm-yard and fainted. In the morning the sunbeams roused him ; and when he came to himself, he took six sacks with him from the barn to carry off the treasure. He found the hill with the three junipers, the slaughtered animals, and the wand ; but the earth showed no signs of having been disturbed, and the treasure had vanished. Probably it still rests beneath the hill, waiting for a bolder man to raise it.

The grandson of the unlucky treasure-seeker, who relates this story, could not say if his grandfather had been equally unfortunate in his marriage, as he never alluded to the subject.

SECTION X

ORIENTAL TALES

UNDER this heading I propose to notice two stories only. The first of these is called the "Maidens who Bathed in the Moonlight" (Kreutzwald), and is peculiarly tame and inconsequential, but yet exhibits one or two features of special interest which forbid its being passed over altogether.

A young man who had already learned the language of birds and other mysteries, and was still desirous to peer into all sorts of secret knowledge, applied to a famous necromancer¹ to initiate him into the secrets hidden under the veil of night. The Finnish sorcerer endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose; but as he persisted, he told him that on the evening of St. Mark's Day, which was not far off, the king of the serpents would hold his

¹ There has been some discussion as to the right meaning to be put upon the words, *Mana tarp* (Death-magician), but it appears to me that necromancer is simply a literal rendering.

court at a place which he indicated, as was the custom every seven years. There would be a dish of heavenly goat's-milk before the king, and if the young man could dip a bit of bread in it, and put it in his mouth before taking to flight, he would gain the secret knowledge which he desired.

At the appointed time, the young man went at dusk to a wide moor, where he could see nothing but a number of hillocks. At midnight a bright light shone from one of the hillocks; it was the king's signal, and all the other snakes, which had been lying like motionless hillocks, uncoiled themselves, and began to move in that direction.¹ At last they gathered themselves into a great heap as large as a haycock. The youth at first feared to approach, but at last crept up on tiptoe, when he saw thousands of snakes clustered round a huge serpent with a gold crown on his head. The youth's blood froze in his veins and his hair stood on end, but he sprang over the heap of hissing serpents, who opened their jaws as he passed, but

¹ This serpent-gathering so much resembles those described in the first book of the *Maha-Bharata*, and in the story of Hasib (or Jamasp) in the *Thousand and One Nights*, that I have referred the present story to the class of tales of Oriental origin.

could not disengage themselves quickly enough to strike him. He secured his prize and fled, pursued by the hissing serpents, till he fell senseless; but at the first rays of the sun he woke up, having left the moor four or five miles behind him, and all danger was now over. He slept through the day, to recover himself from the fatigue and fright, and went into the woods in the following night, where he saw golden bathing benches arranged, with silver bath whisks¹ and silver basins. Presently the loveliest naked maidens assembled from all quarters, and began to wash themselves in the bright moonlight, while the youth stood behind a bush looking on. They were the wood-nymphs, and the daughters of the Meadow-Queen.² Towards morning they disappeared suddenly from his sight, and though he visited the woods again night after night, he never again saw either the bathing utensils or the maidens, and pined away in hopeless longing.

The next story is extremely interesting, and it contains a more elaborate description of the Seal

¹ In Finland and Esthonia they use dried birch-twigs with the leaves attached to whisk themselves with when bathing.

² See vol. i. p. 13.

of Solomon (which we should hardly expect to be known in the legends of a country like Esthonia) than any other which I have seen, except that given by Weil in his *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner*. Weil, however, represents it as a cluster of stones, possessing different virtues, and not as a single stone. The symbol called the Seal of Solomon by the Freemasons, &c., consists of two equilateral triangles intersecting each other within a circle, and is regarded by mystics of every class as one of the most sacred of all symbols. In Eastern legends the mystical name of God is said to have been inscribed on the Seal. Arabian writers say that the embalmed body of Solomon, with the ring on his finger, sits enthroned on one of the islands of the Circumambient Ocean. Cf. the story "Bulookiya" (*Thousand and One Nights*), and Kirby's poem of *Ed-Dimiryahi*.

THE NORTHERN FROG.¹

(KREUTZWALD).

ONCE upon a time, as old people relate, there existed a horrible monster which came from the north. It exterminated men and animals from large districts, and if nobody had been able to arrest its progress, it might gradually have swept all living things from the earth.

It had a body like an ox and legs like a frog; that is to say, two short ones in front, and two long ones behind. Its tail was ten fathoms long. It moved like a frog, but cleared two miles at every bound. Fortunately it used to remain on the spot where it had once alighted for several years, and did not advance farther till it had eaten the whole neighbourhood bare. Its body was entirely encased in scales harder than stone or bronze, so that nothing could injure it. Its two large eyes

¹ Löwe translates the word *kon*, "dragon," but it primarily means a frog or toad; and "dragon" is not among the other meanings which I find in the dictionaries. Besides, the creature is described as resembling a frog in many respects.

shone like the brightest tapers both by day and night, and whoever had the misfortune to meet their glare became as one bewitched, and was forced to throw himself into the jaws of the monster. So it happened that men and animals offered themselves to be devoured, without any necessity for it to move from its place. The neighbouring kings offered magnificent rewards to any one who could destroy the monster by magic or otherwise, and many people had tried their fortune, but their efforts were all futile. On one occasion, a large wood in which the monster was skulking was set on fire. The wood was destroyed, but the noxious animal was not harmed in the slightest degree. However, it was reported among old people that nobody could overcome the monster except with the help of King Solomon's Seal, on which a secret inscription was engraved, from which it could be discovered how the monster might be destroyed. But nobody could tell where the seal was now concealed, nor where to find a sorcerer who could read the inscription.

At length a young man whose head and heart were in the right place determined to set out in search of the seal-ring, trusting in his good fortune.

He started in the direction of the East, where it is supposed that the wisdom of the ancients is to be sought for. After some years he met with a celebrated magician of the East, and asked him for advice. The sorcerer answered, "Men have but little wisdom, and here it can avail you nothing, but God's birds will be your best guides under heaven, if you will learn their language. I can help you with it if you will stay with me for a few days."

The young man thankfully accepted this friendly offer, and replied, "I am unable at present to make you any return for your kindness, but if I should succeed in my enterprise, I will richly reward you for your trouble." Then the sorcerer prepared a powerful charm, by boiling nine kinds of magic herbs which he had gathered secretly by moonlight.¹ He made the young man drink a spoonful every day, and it had the effect of making the language of birds intelligible to him. When he departed, the sorcerer said, "If you should have the good luck to find and get possession of Solomon's Seal, come back to me, that I may read you the inscription on the ring, for there is no one else now living who can do so."

¹ Compare vol. i. p. 223.

On the very next day the young man found the world quite transformed. He no longer went anywhere alone, but found company everywhere, for he now understood the language of birds, and thus many secrets were revealed to him which human wisdom would have been unable to discover. Nevertheless, some time passed before he could learn anything about the ring. At length one evening, when he was exhausted with heat and fatigue, he lay down under a tree in a wood to eat his supper, when he heard two strange birds with bright coloured plumage talking about him in the branches. One of them said, "I know the silly wanderer under the tree, who has already wandered about so much without finding a trace of what he wants. He is searching for the lost ring of King Solomon." The other bird replied, "I think he must seek the help of the Hell-Maiden,¹ who would certainly be able to help him to find it. Even if she herself does not possess the ring, she must know well enough who owns it now." The first bird returned, "It may be as you say, but where can he find the Hell-Maiden, who has no fixed abode, and is here to-day and there to-morrow? He might as well try to fetter

¹ *Põrgu neitsi*. Who she was is not clearly explained.

the wind." "I can't say exactly where she is at present," said the other bird, "but in three days' time she will come to the spring to wash her face, as is her custom every month on the night of the full moon, so that the bloom of youth never disappears from her cheeks, and her face never wrinkles with age." The first bird responded, "Well, the spring is not far off; shall we amuse ourselves by watching her proceedings?" "Willingly," said the other.

The young man resolved at once to follow the birds and visit the spring; but two difficulties troubled him. In the first place, he feared he might be asleep when the birds set out; and secondly, he had no wings, with which he could follow close behind them. He was too weary to lie awake all night, for he could not keep his eyes open, but his anxiety prevented him from sleeping quietly, and he often woke up for fear of missing the departure of the birds. Consequently he was very glad when he looked up in the tree at sunrise, and saw the bright-coloured birds sitting motionless with their heads under their wings. He swallowed his breakfast, and then waited for the birds to wake up. But they did not seem disposed to go anywhere

that morning; but fluttered about as if to amuse themselves, in search of food, and flew from one tree-top to another till evening, when they returned to roost at their old quarters. On the second day it was just the same. However, on the third morning one bird said to the other, "We must go to the spring to-day, to see the Hell-Maiden washing her face." They waited till noon, and then flew away direct towards the south. The young man's heart beat with fear lest he should lose sight of his guides. But the birds did not fly farther than he could see, and perched on the summit of a tree. The young man ran after them till he was all in a sweat and quite out of breath. After resting three times, the birds reached a small open glade, and perched on a high tree at its edge. When the young man arrived, he perceived a spring in the midst of the opening, and sat down under the tree on which the birds were perched. Then he pricked up his ears, and listened to the talk of the feathered creatures.

"The sun has not set," said one bird, "and we must wait till the moon rises and the maiden comes to the well. We will see whether she notices the young man under the tree." The other bird replied, "Nothing escapes her eyes which concerns a

young man. Will this one be clever enough to escape falling into her net?" "We will see what passes between them," returned the first bird.

Evening came, and the full moon had already risen high above the wood, when the young man heard a slight rustling, and in a few moments a maiden emerged from the trees, and sped across the grass to the spring so lightly that her feet hardly seemed to touch the ground. The young man perceived in an instant that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life, and he could not take his eyes from her.

She went straight to the well, without taking any heed of him, raised her eyes to the moon, and then fell on her knees and washed her face nine times in the spring. Every time she looked up at the moon, and cried out, "Fair and round-cheeked, as now thou art, may my beauty likewise endure imperishably." Then she walked nine times round the spring, and each time she sang—

"Let the maiden's face not wrinkle,
Nor her red cheeks lose their beauty;
Though the moon should wane and dwindle,
May my beauty grow for ever,
And my joy bloom on for ever!"

Then she dried her face with her long hair, and was about to depart, when her eyes suddenly fell upon the young man who was sitting under the tree, and she turned towards him immediately. The young man rose up to await her approach. The fair maiden drew nearer, and said to him, "You have exposed yourself to severe punishment for spying on the private affairs of a maiden in the moonlight, but as you are a stranger, and came here by accident, I will forgive you. But you must inform me truly who you are, and how you came here, where no mortal has ever before set foot."

The youth answered with much politeness, "Forgive me, fair lady, for having offended you without my knowledge or intention. When I arrived here, after long wanderings, I found this nice place under the tree, and prepared to camp here for the night. Your arrival interrupted me, and I remained sitting here, thinking that I should not disturb you if I looked on quietly."

The maiden answered in the most friendly manner, "Come to our house to-night. It is better to rest on cushions than on the cold moss."

The young man hesitated for a moment, uncertain whether he ought to accept her friendly invitation or

to decline it. One of the birds in the tree remarked to the other, "He would be a fool if he did not accept her offer." Perhaps the maiden did not know the language of birds, for she added, "Fear nothing, my friend. I have not invited you with any ill intention, but wish you well with all my heart." The birds responded, "Go where you are asked, but beware of giving any blood, lest you should sell your soul."

Then the youth went with her. Not far from the spring they arrived at a beautiful garden, in which stood a magnificent mansion, which shone in the moonlight as if the roof and walls were made of gold and silver. When the youth entered, he passed through very splendid apartments, each grander than the last; hundreds of tapers were burning in gold chandeliers, and everywhere diffused a light like that of day. At length they reached a room where an elegant supper was laid out, and two chairs stood at the table, one of silver and the other of gold. The maiden sat down on the golden chair, and invited the youth to take the other. White-robed damsels served up and removed the dishes, but they spoke no word, and trod as softly as if on cats' feet. After supper the youth remained

alone with the royal maiden, and they kept up a lively conversation, till a woman in red garments appeared to remind them that it was bedtime.

Then the maiden showed the young man to another room, where stood a silken bed with cushions of down, after which she retired. He thought he must have gone to heaven with his living body, for he never expected to find such luxuries on earth. But he could never afterwards tell whether it was the delusion of dreams or whether he actually heard voices round his bed crying out words which chilled his heart—"Give no blood!"

Next morning the maiden asked him whether he would not like to stay here, where the whole week was one long holiday. And as the youth did not answer immediately, she added, "I am young and fair, as you see yourself, and I am under no one's authority, and can do what I like. Until now, it never entered my head to marry, but from the moment when I saw you, other thoughts came suddenly into my mind, for you please me. If we should both be of one mind, let us wed without delay. I possess endless wealth and goods, as you may easily convince yourself at every step, and thus I can live in royal state day by day. What-

ever your heart desires, that can I provide for you."

The cajoleries of the fair maid might well have turned the youth's head, but by good fortune he remembered that the birds had called her the Hell-Maiden, and had warned him to give her no blood, and that he had received the same warning at night, though whether sleeping or waking he knew not. He therefore replied, "Dear lady, do not be angry with me if I tell you candidly that marriage should not be rushed upon at racehorse speed, but requires longer consideration. Pray therefore allow me a few days for reflection, until we are better acquainted." "Why not?" answered the fair maid. "I am quite content that you should think on the matter for a few weeks, and set your mind at rest."

Lest the youth might feel dull, the maiden led him from one part of the magnificent house to another, and showed him all the rich storehouses and treasure-chambers, thinking that it might soften his heart. All these treasures were the result of magic, for the maiden could have built such a palace with all its contents on any day and at any place with the aid of Solomon's Seal. But everything was unsubstantial, for it was woven of wind,

and dissolved again into the wind, without leaving a trace behind. But the youth was not aware of this, and looked upon all the glamour as reality.

One day the maiden led him into a secret chamber, where a gold casket stood on a silver table. This she showed him, and then said, "Here is the most precious of all my possessions, the like of which is not to be found in the whole world. It is a costly golden ring. If you will marry me, I will give it you for a keepsake, and it will make you the happiest of all mankind. But in order that the bond of our love should last for ever, you must give me three drops of blood from the little finger of your left hand in exchange for the ring."

The youth turned cold when he heard her ask for blood, for he remembered that his soul was at stake. But he was crafty enough not to let her notice his emotion, and not to refuse her, but asked carelessly what were the properties of the ring.

The maiden answered, "No one living has been able to fathom the whole power of this ring, and no one can completely explain the secret signs engraved upon it. But, even with the imperfect knowledge of its properties which I possess, I can perform many wonders which no other creature can accom-

plish. If I put the ring on the little finger of my left hand, I can rise in the air like a bird and fly whithersoever I will. If I place the ring on the ring-finger of my left hand, I become invisible to all eyes, while I myself can see everything that passes around me. If I put the ring on the middle finger of my left hand, I become invulnerable to all weapons, and neither water nor fire can hurt me. If I place it on the index finger of my left hand, I can create all things which I desire with its aid ; I can build houses in a moment, or produce other objects. As long as I wear it on the thumb of my left hand, my hand remains strong enough to break down rocks and walls. Moreover, the ring bears other secret inscriptions which, as I said before, no one has yet been able to explain ; but it may readily be supposed that they contain many important secrets. In ancient times, the ring belonged to King Solomon, the wisest of kings, and in whose reign lived the wisest of men. At the present day it is unknown whether the ring was formed by divine power or by human hands ; but it is supposed that an angel presented the ring to the wise king."

When the youth heard the fair one speak in this way, he determined immediately to endeavour to

possess himself of the ring by craft, and therefore pretended that he could not believe what he had heard. He hoped by this means to induce the maiden to take the ring out of the casket to show him, when he might have an opportunity of possessing himself of the talisman. But he did not venture to ask her plainly to show him the ring. He flattered and cajoled her, but the only thought in his mind was to get possession of the ring. Presently the maiden took the key of the casket from her bosom as if to unlock it; but she changed her mind, and replaced it, saying, "There's plenty of time for that afterwards."

A few days later, their conversation reverted to the magic ring, and the youth said, "In my opinion, the things which you tell me of the power of your ring are quite incredible."

Then the maiden opened the casket and took out the ring, which shone through her fingers like the brightest sun-ray. Then she placed it in jest on the middle finger of her left hand, and told the youth to take a knife and stab her with it wherever he liked, for it would not hurt her. The youth protested against the proposed experiment; but, as she insisted, he was obliged to humour her. At first he

began in play, and then in earnest to try to strike the maiden with the knife; but it seemed as if there was an invisible wall of iron between them. The blade would not pierce it, and the maiden stood before him unhurt and smiling. Then she moved the ring to her ring-finger, and in an instant she vanished from the eyes of the youth, and he could not imagine what had become of her. Presently she stood before him smiling, in the same place as before, holding the ring between her fingers.

"Let me try," said he, "whether I can also do these strange things with the ring."

The maiden suspected no deceit, and gave it to him.

The youth pretended he did not quite know what to do with it and asked, "On which finger must I place the ring to become invulnerable to sharp weapons?" "On the ring-finger of the left hand," said the maiden, smiling. She then took the knife herself and tried to strike him, but could not do him any harm. Then the youth took the knife from her and tried to wound himself, but he found that this too was impossible. Then he asked the maiden how he could cleave stones and rocks with the ring. She took him to the enclosure where stood a block of granite a fathom high. "Now

place the ring," said the maiden, "on the thumb of your left hand, and then strike the stone with your fist, and you will see the strength of your hand." The youth did so, and to his amazement he saw the stone shiver into a thousand pieces under the blow. Then he thought, "He who does not seize good fortune by the horns is a fool, for when it has once flown, it never returns." While he was still jesting about the destruction of the stone, he played with the ring, and slipped it suddenly on the ring-finger of his left hand. Then cried the maiden, "You will remain invisible to me until you take off the ring again." But this was far from the young man's thoughts. He hurried forwards a few paces, and then moved the ring to the little finger of his left hand, and soared into the air like a bird. When the maiden saw him flying away, she thought at first that this experiment too was only in jest, and cried out, "Come back, my friend. You see now that I have told you the truth." But he who did not return was the youth, and when the maiden realised his treachery, she broke out into bitter lamentations over her misfortune.

The youth did not cease his flight till he arrived, some days later, at the house of the famous sorcerer

who had taught him the language of birds. The sorcerer was greatly delighted to find that his pupil's journey had turned out so successfully. He set to work at once to read the secret inscriptions on the ring, but he spent seven weeks before he could accomplish it. He then gave the young man the following instructions how to destroy the Northern Frog:—"You must have a great iron horse cast, with small wheels under each foot, so that it can be moved backwards and forwards. You must mount this, and arm yourself with an iron spear two fathoms long, which you will only be able to wield when you wear the magic ring on the thumb of your left hand. The spear must be as thick as a great birch-tree in the middle, and both ends must be sharpened to a point. You must fasten two strong chains, ten fathoms long, to the middle of the spear, strong enough to hold the frog. As soon as the frog has bitten hard on the spear, and it has pierced his jaws, you must spring like the wind from the iron horse to avoid falling into the monster's throat, and must fix the ends of the chains into the ground with iron posts so firmly that no force can drag them out again. In three or four days' time the strength of the frog will be so far exhausted that

you can venture to approach it. Then place Solomon's ring on the thumb of your left hand, and beat the frog to death. But till you reach it, you must keep the ring constantly on the ring-finger of your left hand, that the monster cannot see you, or it would strike you dead with its long tail. But when you have accomplished all this, take great care not to lose the ring, nor to allow anybody to deprive you of it by a trick."

Our friend thanked the sorcerer for his advice, and promised to reward him for his trouble afterwards. But the sorcerer answered, "I have learned so much magic wisdom by deciphering the secret inscriptions on the ring, that I need no other profit for myself." Then they parted, and the young man hastened home, which was no longer difficult to him, as he could fly like a bird wherever he wished.

He reached home in a few weeks, and heard from the people that the horrible Northern Frog was already in the neighbourhood, and might be expected to cross the frontier any day. The king caused it to be proclaimed everywhere that if any one could destroy the frog, he would not only give him part of his kingdom, but his daughter in marriage likewise. A few days later, the young man came before the

king, and declared that he hoped to destroy the monster, if the king would provide him with what was necessary; and the king joyfully consented. All the most skilful craftsmen of the neighbourhood were called together to construct first the iron horse, next the great spear, and lastly the iron chains, the links of which were two inches thick. But when all was ready, it was found that the iron horse was so heavy that a hundred men could not move it from its place. The youth was therefore obliged to move the horse away alone, with the help of his ring.

The frog was now hardly four miles away, so that a couple of bounds might carry it across the frontier. The young man now reflected how he could best deal with the monster alone, for, as he was obliged to push the heavy iron horse from below, he could not mount it, as the sorcerer had directed him. But he unexpectedly received advice from the beak of a raven, "Mount upon the iron horse, and set the spear against the ground, and you can then push yourself along as you would push a boat from the shore." The young man did so, and found that he was able to proceed in this way. The monster at once opened its jaws afar off, ready to receive the

expected prey. A few fathoms more, and the man and the iron horse were in the monster's jaws. The young man shook with horror, and his heart froze to ice, but he kept his wits about him, and thrust with all his might, so that the iron spear which he held upright in his hand, pierced the jaws of the monster. Then he leaped from the iron horse, and sprang away like lightning as the monster clashed his jaws together. A hideous roar, which was heard for many miles, announced that the Northern Frog had bitten the spear fast. When the youth turned round, he saw one point of the spear projecting a foot above the upper jaw, and concluded that the other was firmly fixed in the lower one; but the frog had crushed the iron horse between his teeth. The young man now hastened to fasten the chains in the ground, for which strong iron posts several fathoms long had been prepared.

The death-struggles of the monster lasted for three days and three nights, and when it reared itself, it struck the ground so violently with its tail, that the earth was shaken for fifty miles round. At length, when it was too weak to move its tail any longer, the young man lifted a stone with the help of his ring, which twenty men could not have

moved, and beat the monster about the head with it until no further sign of life was visible.

Immeasurable was the rejoicing when the news arrived that the terrible monster was actually dead. The victor was brought to the capital with all possible respect, as if he had been a powerful king. The old king did not need to force his daughter to the marriage, for she herself desired to marry the strong man who had alone successfully accomplished what others had not been able to effect with the aid of a whole army. After some days, a magnificent wedding was prepared. The festivities lasted a whole month, and all the kings of the neighbouring countries assembled to thank the man who had rid the world of its worst enemy. But amid the marriage festival and the general rejoicings it was forgotten that the monster's carcass had been left unburied, and as it was now decaying, it occasioned such a stench that no one could approach it. This gave rise to diseases of which many people died. Then the king's son-in-law determined to seek help from the sorcerer of the East. This did not seem difficult to him with the aid of his ring, with which he could fly in the air like a bird.

But the proverb says that injustice never prospers, and that as we sow we reap. The king's son-in-law was doomed to realise the truth of this adage with his stolen ring. The Hell-Maiden left no stone unturned, night or day, to discover the whereabouts of her lost ring. When she learned through her magic arts that the king's son-in-law had set out in the form of a bird to visit the sorcerer, she changed herself into an eagle, and circled about in the air till the bird for which she was waiting came in sight. She recognised him at once by the ring, which he carried on a riband round his neck. Then the eagle swooped upon the bird, and at the moment that she seized him in her claws she tore the ring from his neck with her beak, before he could do anything to prevent her. Then the eagle descended to the earth with her prey, and they both stood together in their former human shapes. "Now you have fallen into my hands, you rascal," cried the Hell-Maiden. "I accepted you as my lover, and you practised deceit and theft against me: is that my reward? You robbed me of my most precious jewel by fraud, and you hoped to pass a happy life as the king's son-in-law; but now we have turned over a new

leaf. You are in my power, and you shall atone to me for all your villainy." "Forgive me, forgive me," said the king's son-in-law. "I know well that I have treated you very badly, but I heartily repent of my fault." But the maiden answered, "Your pleadings and your repentance come too late, and nothing can help you more. I dare not overlook your offence, for that would bring me disgrace, and make me a byword among the people. Twice have you sinned against me: for, firstly, you have despised my love; and, secondly, you have stolen my ring; and now you must suffer your punishment." As she spoke, she placed the ring on the thumb of her left hand, took the man on her arm like a doll, and carried him away. This time she did not take him to a magnificent palace, but to a cavern in the rocks where chains were hanging on the walls. The maiden grasped the ends of the chains and fettered the man hand and foot, so that it was impossible for him to escape, and she said in anger, "Here shall you remain a prisoner till your end. I will send you so much food every day, that you shall not die of hunger, but you need never expect to escape." Then she left him.

The king and his daughter endured a time of

terrible anxiety as weeks and weeks passed by, and the traveller neither returned nor sent any tidings. The king's daughter often dreamed that her consort was in great distress, and therefore she begged her father to assemble the sorcerers from all parts, in hopes that they might perhaps be able to give some information respecting what had happened to him, and how he could be rescued. All the sorcerers could say was that he was still alive, but in great distress, and they could neither discover where he was, nor how he could be found. At length a famous sorcerer from Finland was brought to the king, who was able to inform him that his son-in-law was kept in captivity in the East, not by a human being, but by a more powerful creature. Then the king sent messengers to the East to seek for his lost son-in-law. Fortunately they met with the old sorcerer who had read the inscriptions on Solomon's Seal, and had thus learned wisdom which was hidden from all others. The sorcerer soon discovered what he wished to know, and said, "The man is kept prisoner by magic art in such and such a place, but you cannot release him without my help, so I must go with you myself."

They set out accordingly, and in a few days, led

by the birds, they reached the cavern in the rock where the king's son-in-law had already languished for seven years in captivity. He recognised the sorcerer immediately, but the latter did not know him, he was so much worn and wasted. The sorcerer loosed his chains by his magic art, took him home, and nursed and tended him till he had recovered sufficient strength to set out on his journey. He reached his destination on the very day that the old king died, and was chosen king. Then came days of joy after long days of suffering; and he lived happily till his end, but he never recovered the magic ring, nor has it ever since been seen by human eyes.

The succeeding prose sections are short, and chiefly contain stories from Jannsen's collections, of many of which I have given only a brief outline.

SECTION XI

CHURCH-STORIES

SEVERAL of these, given by Jannsen, may be briefly narrated.

THE CHURCH AT REVEL.

REVEL was formerly an unimportant place, and the inhabitants wished to make it famous by building a church. They contracted with the great architect Olaf¹ to erect it; and when it was completed, and he was about to fix the cross on the summit, his wife cried out joyfully, "Olaf will come home to-day with a thousand barrels of gold."² But scarcely had

¹ Doubtless Olev of the *Kalevipoeg*; possibly St. Olaf may also be intended.

² This incident reminds us of the story of St. Olaf and the giant Wind and Weather (see Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, Bohn's edition, 1860, p. 117), though here it is the giant church-builder who falls. According to one of the legends of Cologne Cathedral, the architect was hurled from the top of the unfinished building by the Devil. The calling of a person by name was often regarded by the Scandinavians as a death-omen.

Olaf fixed the cross in its place, when he slipped and fell to the ground, and a toad and a snake sprang out of his mouth. The Devil wished to destroy the church, but could not get near it; so he made a sling at Pernau, and hurled a great rock at it. But the sling broke, and the rock fell half-way between Pernau and Revel, where it now remains. (Similar tales are related of the Devil in many countries, but are perhaps commonest in Scandinavia.)

THE CHURCH AT PÜHALEPP.

BEFORE Christian times there was a great alder forest in the island of Dagö, where the people used to make sacrifices and hold festivals. Afterwards the forest was hewn down, all but one tree, under which the people wished to build a church. But the missionaries would not consent, till a man advised them to yoke two oxen to the cart in which the building materials should be loaded, and then let them wander at will. Where they halted, the church should be built.

So the oxen were driven to the alder forest, where there was plenty of grass, and after being

allowed to graze awhile they were brought back and yoked to the cart. They returned to the heath and began to feed, and the church was erected on that spot and named the Church of Pühalepp.

The Devil thought to destroy it by hurling two great rocks at it at night from a hill, after having carefully noted its position in the daytime. He missed his aim in the darkness, but mounted his mare and rode to see what damage was done. Just as he reached the church the cock crew, and he was forced to turn round and ride back to hell. But the marks of the mare's hoofs are still to be seen where he heard the cock crow.

Another story relates how the Devil pulled down a church which was in course of erection, and tore up the very foundations. But a wise man told the people to take two white calves, dropped on that night, harness them to a cart, and build the church where they stopped, which was accordingly done.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS.

A BLIND nobleman of Vastemois, near Fellin, was driving out one day, when his coachman saw a splendid golden cross. His master ordered him to drive up to it; and on touching it, he recovered his sight. In gratitude, he built a church on the spot, which was afterwards destroyed in war-time, and only the walls left standing. The people were too poor to rebuild it, but from the ruins grew a tree which all regarded as holy. The then over-lord commanded them to fell it, and as they refused, he did so himself, but was immediately struck blind.

THE CHURCH AT FELLIN.

IN former days, the church of Fellin did not stand where it stands at present, but close to the lake. It was prophesied that it should stand till seven brothers should be present in it together. When this happened by chance, the church began to sink. The congregation escaped, except the seven brothers,

who remained in it, but it sunk till even the summit of the spire had disappeared. The site is now a marshy meadow, but if any one is there near midnight on New Year's Eve, he hears entrancing voices, and cannot move from the spot till the church clock beneath the ground has struck the last stroke of twelve.

SECTION XII

UNNATURAL BROTHERS

THE story of the wicked rich brother who oppresses the poor one is not unknown in Esthonia. There is a hideous story of such a pair, relating how when the poor brother died his widow begged grave-clothing from the wife of the rich one. When the rich brother returned, he scolded his wife, and rushed off, cursing and swearing, to strip the body of his dead brother, even in his coffin, crying, "That's mine! that's mine!" But when he would have laid the naked corpse back in the coffin, it clung round his neck, and he was compelled to carry it about with him for the rest of his life.

THE RICH BROTHER AND THE POOR ONE.

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, one of whom had abundance, but the other was very poor.

As is the way of the world, riches do not heed poverty, and thus it was with the two brothers. The rich one would not give the poor one even a spoonful of soup.

One day the rich brother gave a great feast. The poor brother expected to have been invited, but his hopes were vain.

All at once a bright idea struck him, and he went to the river and caught three large pike. "I'll carry these to my brother," said he, "and perhaps they will bring me a blessing."

He took the fish to his brother, and addressed him humbly, like a rich lord. But it made no difference. His brother only said, "Many thanks," turned his back, and went off.

What could the poor brother do? He also turned round, and went his way, sorrowfully reflecting, "He is my brother in name indeed, but he's worse than an entire stranger!"

All at once he saw an old man sitting by the road, who rose up quickly and went towards him, saying, "Friend, why do you look so sorrowfully on the world?"

"Sorrowful or not," said the poor brother, "it goes well enough with me! I brought my rich

brother three fish for a present, and he didn't even give me a drink in return!"

"But you perhaps got something else?" asked the old man.

"Oh, yes, 'many thanks,'" said he; "that's your something else!"

The old man answered, "Give me your 'many thanks,' and you shall become a rich man."

"Take it, and welcome," said the poor brother.

Then the old man instructed him as follows:—"Go home, look for Poverty under the stove, and throw it into the river, and you shall see how it will fare with you."

Then he went his way, and the poor brother returned home. He found Poverty under the stove, seized it, and flung it into the river.

After this, everything which he undertook succeeded with the poor brother, and it was a real marvel to see how he got on. His fields grew fine harvests, and his barns and stables were soon more imposing than his rich brother's.

When the rich brother saw it, he grew envious, and wanted to know how the other had got wealthy. He was always teasing him to know how it was, and at last the other got tired of it, and said,

"How did I get rich? I dragged Poverty out from under the stove, and threw it in the water. That's how it was!"

"That's how it was," cried the rich brother. "Wait a bit! your sort shan't outdo me!"

So he went to the river and fished for Poverty, from whom he supposed that his poor brother had received everything. He fished and fished, and would do nothing else, till at length he held Poverty fast.

While he inspected and examined it at home, it slipped through his fingers and hid under his stove, and nobody could get it out again.

After this everything went worse and worse with the rich brother, till he became at last quite poor, and remained so.

This story, which I have not abridged, is a well-known Slavonic legend. It is probably connected with the story of the three apes which forms the introduction to that of "Khaleefeh the Fisherman," in the *Thousand and One Nights*.

SECTION XIII

PLAGUE-LEGENDS

THE plague continued to rage in Eastern Europe long after it had disappeared from the West, and down to a very recent period. Consequently we find plague-legends, which have almost died out in the British Islands, except in Scotland, rife among all the Eastern nations. The Plague-demon is usually represented as female, but in the Esthonian legends it is masculine.

The Plague once seated himself in a boat which was returning to the Island of Rogö,¹ which had hitherto escaped his ravages, in the shape of a tall black man with a great scythe in his hand. He arrived among the dead crew, and at once sprang on shore and began to destroy the inhabitants. Some saw the Plague himself, and others not. If any one saw him, his heart froze with terror

¹ There is a similar tale told of the arrival of the Cholera in one of the Greek islands.

before he could speak a word.¹ One night during a violent storm, an old woman saw him enter her cottage as she was sitting alone spinning; but she gathered courage to cry out, "Welcome, in God's name." He stopped short, muttering, "That's enough," returned to the boat in which he had come, and went out to sea. The storm ceased as he departed, and since then he has never reappeared.

In the Island of Nuckö he appeared as an old grey man, with a taper in one hand and a staff in the other, a book under his arm, and a three-cornered hat on his head. As he went from house to house, he looked up the names of his victims in his book, let his taper shine on their faces to make sure that he had made no mistake, and touched the doomed with his staff. A peasant once saw him enter his cottage, and touch all with his staff, except himself and the infant in the cradle. All the others died before cockcrow.²

¹ Speaking of the Vad Velen, the Yellow Plague, in Britain, we are told in the *Mabinogion* that all who saw him were doomed to die.

² This story somewhat resembles that of the old hag seen by Lord Seaforth when lying ill of scarlet fever with several of his schoolfellows. The narrative has been reprinted several times, and is included in Stead's *More Ghost Stories*, p. 37.

Another time the Plague was driving down a steep path which led to a village, when he upset his vehicle and broke the axle. A passing peasant helped him to bind it up, and directed him to the smithy; but he declared that he was the Plague, and for the good deed that had been done him all the village should be spared. So he turned his horse, drove back up the hill, and vanished like a cloud. When the news was brought to the village, bonfires of rejoicing were lighted, and kept up for many days.

SECTION XIV

BEAST-STORIES

I COMMENCE with wolf-stories, which are rather numerous in Esthonia. One of them relates the creation of the wolf. When God had created the world, he asked the Devil what he thought of his work; and the Devil objected that there was no animal to scare away mischievous boys from the woods when the bear and the snake were sunk in their winter sleep. Thereupon God gave leave to the Devil to make such an animal as he wished, and to give it life by the formula, "Stand up and devour the Devil." Then the Devil made the wolf's back of a strong hedge-pole, the head of a tree-stump, the breast of twigs and leather, and the loins of bricks.¹ He made the tail of a fern-frond, and the feet of alder-stumps, but he put a stone into its breast for the heart. He clothed the body with

¹ Such origins are common in Esthonian and Finnish folk-literature, and I regard them as relics of fetishism.

moss, burning coals formed the eyes, and iron nails were used for the teeth and claws. He then named the creature Wolf, and pronounced the spell as far as "devour," when the creature raised his head and snorted. The Devil was too much frightened to finish, but afterwards plucked up courage, and repeated the spell, substituting God's name for his own. But the wolf took no notice, and when the Devil appealed to God, he was only told to use the same spell; so he stood a long way off and pronounced it. Then the wolf rushed at the Devil, who was forced to hide under a stone to save himself. Since then the wolf has been the Devil's worst enemy, and pursues him everywhere.

Another story relates how God forbade the wolf to eat the flocks and the dogs, but to receive his share when the farmers baked. But one day a farmer's wife threw the wolf a red-hot stone instead of bread, and he burnt his muzzle, which has been black ever since. Since then he devours whatever falls in his way.

A farmer, hemmed in by a herd of wolves, succeeded in driving them away, but was followed home by one of them. When he took his provisions out of the sledge, he laid his hand on a square object like a

whetstone. He then remembered hearing that the wolves sometimes receive food from heaven, and thought this might be their portion. So he flung it to the wolf, saying, "Take it if it's yours;" and the wolf seized it and disappeared.

There is an odd story of a young woman who was carrying an apron full of eggs to her mother. She was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm, and sheltered under a fir-tree. She felt something moving among the eggs, and was frightened; but presently she was still more terrified when she found a great wolf tugging at her apron. She dropped it in her fright, and a black cat jumped out and darted away, pursued by the wolf. When she reached the village, her mother told her that the black cat was the Devil, who had taken that form in order to play her a trick or do her some injury, but had been scared away by the wolf.

Have we here an inverted and distorted echo of "Little Red Riding Hood?"

A peasant who was broiling fish in the forest at nightfall met with a still more alarming adventure. A black man appeared to him, and commanded him to fetch him a spit, for he wanted to broil fish too. But the spit which he wanted was a long sharp

stake, and the peasant himself was to be the fish. In his terror the peasant called "St. George's Dogs" to his aid, and a pack of wolves rushed out, and chased the Devil away, while the peasant drew out the axle from his cart-wheel, and supplied its place with a pole of rowan-wood.

Another story relates how an unfortunate wolf missed getting his usual rations from God, and set out to forage for himself. After sparing some whom he met, and allowing others to escape, he fell into the hands of a young peasant, who gave him a sound beating and then took refuge in a tree. The wolf's relatives, seeking revenge, climbed on each other's back till they nearly reached the peasant, who upset them by a stratagem, and they fell, many breaking their limbs. Since then a wolf always runs away when he sees a man.

Were-wolves are sometimes alluded to in Esthonian tales.

The following stories are of a more miscellaneous character, and some of them are sufficiently interesting to be given with little or no abridgment.

THE MAN WITH THE BAST SHOES.

ONCE upon a time a traveller came to a village and asked for a night's lodging. He was handsomely dressed, but he had coarse bast shoes on his feet. A friendly farmer received the stranger hospitably, and offered him accommodation. At night the man asked his host, "Farmer, where shall I put my bast shoes?" The farmer showed him the place, but he added, "No, my shoes must spend the night among the feathered people, for that is what they are used to. So I would rather hang them on the perch in the hen-house." The farmer laughed at the joke, and permitted him to do so.

As soon as all were in their first sleep, the owner of the bast shoes rose from his bed, slipped into the hen-house, tore the shoes to pieces, and scattered the coarse plaits among the fowls. Next morning he went to the master of the house and complained, "Farmer, my property was badly damaged last night." Said the farmer, "Well, let whoever has done the mischief make it good." This was just

what the stranger wanted, and he immediately caught the dappled cock, and put him into his knapsack, "for," said he, "he's the culprit; last night he pecked at my shoes till he spoiled them." Then he proceeded on his journey with the cock.

On the evening of the same day he arrived at a neighbouring village, and asked again for accommodation. At night he put the cock in the farmer's sheep-pen, and excused himself by saying, "My cock has not been used to anything else since he was a chicken." But at night he strangled the bird, and then complained, "The sheep have killed my cock." He indemnified himself by taking a fat ram from the flock, for he held by the farmer's adage, "He who has done the mischief must pay for it."

By a similar stratagem he exchanged the ram at the third village for an ox, and at last the ox for a horse. He soon contrived to get a sledge too, and drove merrily over hill and dale, till the stones flew behind him, while he contrived new schemes and stratagems. On the way, he encountered Master Reynard, who persuaded him by entreaties and cajoleries to take him into his sledge. After a while, the wolf and bear joined them, and likewise found a place in the sledge; but this made the load

too heavy, and when they came to a curve in the road, the side-poles of the sledge gave way. Then the man sent his companions to fetch wood to make a new pole. But none of the three brought a proper one back. The fox and wolf brought thin sticks in their mouths, and the bear brought a whole pine-tree, roots and all. Then the man went himself, and soon found the wood which he wanted. Meantime, the wild beasts availed themselves of the opportunity, and sprang upon the horse and devoured it. But they stuffed the skin nicely with straw, and set it carefully up, so that it stood again on its four legs as if it was alive.

When the man came back with the pole, he mended the sledge and harnessed the horse again. "Oho! now we'll drive on." But alas! the horse would not move. Then the man looked at the red scamp, the grey rascal, and the brown villain, and said angrily, "Give me my horse back." But the wild beasts answered, "You killed it yourself, while we were running about looking for wood by your orders."

Thus they stood quarrelling and disputing, till Reynard considered how he could best put an end to the dispute and save his own skin. He knew

of a pit in the neighbourhood which the hunter had dug for a wolf-trap, and covered loosely with thin twigs. "The matter won't be settled by quarrelsome and angry words," cried he; "but come, let the four of us go to the wolf-pit; we will all tread on it at once, and whoever falls in shall be adjudged guilty." The rest agreed, and when they stood on the twigs, they broke under their weight, and precipitated them into the pit, and even Reynard was unable to escape. He had trusted too much to the lightness of his tread, and had trodden on the twigs without consideration. Now they were all in the trap together, and none of them could hope to escape. The time seemed long to them, and their hunger soon became too great to bear.

First of all, the wild beasts attacked the man of the bast shoes and devoured him, and then Reynard had to resign his life. Last of all the bear throttled the wolf. Then came the hunter and gave the bear his quietus. Thus all the four rascals experienced the truth of the proverb, "As the deed, so the reward."

WHY THE DOG AND CAT AND THE CAT AND MOUSE ARE ENEMIES.

IN former days all animals dwelt together in peace ; but then it befell that the dogs killed and devoured hares and other game in the open fields. The other animals complained, and when God called the dogs to account, they objected that they had nothing to eat. Their plea was admitted, and leave was granted them to eat fallen animals. The dogs requested and received a written license to that effect, which was intrusted to the sheep-dog, as the largest and most reliable among them. But in autumn the sheep-dog was very busy, and could neither carry it about with him nor find a dry place for it, so he intrusted it to the care of his friend the tom-cat, who had always a safe room, or sat on the stove. The cat arched his back, and rubbed it against his friend's foot, as a promise of fidelity, and the document was laid on the stove, where it was supposed to be safe.

One day the dogs found a pony in the wood which had fallen, so they fell upon it, and killed and devoured it. The animals complained again,

and the dogs were pronounced guilty; but they appealed to the license, in which it was not stated whether the fallen animals should be dead or alive. When the sheep-dog and the cat sought for the document, they could not find it, for the mice had nibbled it away.

The cats were so angry with the mice that they began to kill and eat them, and have done so ever since; but the dogs likewise became enemies of the cats, as they are at present.

The sheep-dog did not venture to return to his fellows without the license. They waited for him in vain, and at last followed him, and sought for him everywhere, but could not find him. So whenever a dog sees another he runs to ask him whether he has not got the missing document with him.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SWALLOW.

THE wife of a drunkard was sitting weaving with her child on her lap. She wore a black cloth on her head, a red neckerchief, a white shift, and a coal-black petticoat. When her husband came home, he pushed his wife away, and destroyed the loom

with an axe. Then he killed the child with a blow of his fist, and beat his wife till she fell senseless. But Ukko took pity on her, and changed her into a swallow. As she was trying to escape, the man struck at her with a knife, but only cleft her tail. Since that time she flies about twittering her misfortunes, and does not shun men like other birds, but builds her nest against their houses.

THE SPIDER AND THE HORNET.

ONCE upon a time some boys burned a hornet's nest because the hornet stung them so badly. Then the hornet went to God to complain that the boys despised His gifts, and scattered broken victuals about in the fields. But God objected that she had no witnesses. So she went to the king of the spiders, and made him return with her to God, who asked if he had seen the boys scatter food about the fields. But the spider said that it was not their fault, for they had no table to put their bread on. Then God praised the spider for speaking the truth, and condemned the hornet for telling lies and hating her neighbours without a

cause. He then struck her on the back with his staff, and cast her down from heaven to earth, so that she broke in two with the fall. But he let the spider down with a cord, because he had spoken the truth. Since then the spider has had a net and a web, by which he can climb up and down as he likes, as on a cord; but the hornet still retains the pinched-in body which she got when falling from heaven, but is fat enough at both ends.

THE OFFICIOUS FLIES.

A FEW dozen flies once attacked a cart-horse who was feeding quietly in a thicket, and lamented that they were not more numerous, that they might make him lie down. Presently his skin began to itch, when he lay down, rolled first on one side and then on the other, and crushed them all.

PART III

Esthonian Ballads, &c.

FOR reasons stated in the Preface, only a few specimens are here given.

THE HERALD OF WAR ¹

To the Finnish Bridge when driving
On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
And upon my tongue defiance,
What was that which came to meet me,
And what horror to confound me?
Nothing but an ancient corbie,
Aged crow, a wretched creature ;

¹ *Kalevipoeg*, Canto 9, lines 769-925. Neus, *Ehstnische Volkslieder*, pp. 305-311. The manner in which the gathering symbols of the horrors of war, each more terrible than the last, are successively brought upon the scene in this poem is very fine.

With his beak he sniffed around him,
And his nostrils snuffed the vapour ;
He had smelt the war already,
When his nostrils snuffed the vapour,
That he might discern the message
Which I carried in my pocket ;
He had smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood allured him.

To the Finnish Bridge when driving
On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
Swift I hastened as an envoy,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
In my charge the leader's orders,
And upon my tongue the secret
That the flags in breeze should flutter,
And the lance-points smite in battle,
And the swords should do their duty.
What was that which came to meet me,
And what horror to confound me ?
'Twas an eagle came to meet me,
Eagle fierce with beak hooked sharply ;
With his beak he sniffed around him,
Through the mist he pushed his nostrils,
By the scent he sought to fathom
What was in the envoy's message.
He had smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood had reached him,
And he went to call his comrades.

To the Finnish Bridge when driving

On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
Swift I hastened on as envoy,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
And upon my tongue the secret
And the leader's secret orders
That the flags should now be waving,
And the spear-points should be sharpened,
What was it I there encountered,
And what met me there to vex me?
'Twas the raven's son that met me,
'Twas a carrion-bird that met me;
With his beak he sniffed around him,
And his nostrils snuffed the vapour,
That the meaning of my message
With his nose he thus might fathom.
He had smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood had reached him,
And he went to call his comrades.

To the Finnish Bridge when driving
On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
While I hastened as an envoy,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
And upon my tongue the secret,
And the leader's secret orders,
What was that which came to meet me,
And what horror to confound me?
'Twas a little wolf that met me,

And a bear that followed closely ;
With their snouts they sniffed around them,
Through the mist they pushed their nostrils,
Seeking thus to probe the secret,
And the letter to discover ;
They had smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood had reached them,
And they ran to spread the tidings.

To the Finnish Bridge when driving
On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
While I hastened as an envoy,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
And upon my tongue defiance,
With the leader's secret orders
That the flags unfurled should flutter,
And the spear-points do their duty,
And the axes should be lifted,
And the swords should flash in sunlight,
What was that which came to meet me,
And what horror to confound me ?
It was Famine met me tottering,
Tottering Famine, chewing garbage ;
With her nose she sniffed around her,
That the meaning of my message
With her nose she thus might fathom ;
For she smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood had reached her,
And she went to call her comrades.

To the Finnish Bridge while driving

On the west wind's path of copper,
On the pathway of the rainbow,
While I hastened as an envoy,
With the king's note in my wallet,
And his mandate in my bosom,
On my tongue the secret orders
That the flags unfurled should flutter,
And the spear-points do their duty,
And the axes and the fish-spears
All should do the work before them,
What was that which came to meet me,
What unlooked-for horror met me?
'Twas the Plague I there encountered,
Crafty Plague, the people's murderer,
Of the sevenfold war-plagues direst ;
With his nose he sniffed around him,
And his nostrils snuffed the vapour,
Seeking thus to probe the matter,
And the letter to discover ;
He had smelt the war already,
And the scent of blood had lured him
And he went to call his comrades.

After this my horse I halted,
Yoked him with a yoke of iron,
Fettered him with Kalev's fetters,
That he stood as rooted firmly,
From the spot to move unable,
While I pondered and considered,
Deeply in my heart reflecting
If the profit of my journey
Were not lost in greater evil

For the war brings wounds and bloodshed,
And the war has throat of serpent.
Wherefore then should I the battle,
Whence springs only pain and murder,
Forth to peaceful homesteads carry?
Let a message so accursed
In the ocean-depths be sunken,
There to sleep in endless slumber,
Lost among the spawn of fishes,
There to rest in deepest caverns,
Rather than that I should take it,
Till it spreads among the hamlets.
Thereupon I took the mandate
Which I carried in my wallet,
And amid the depths I sunk it,
Underneath the waves of ocean,
Till the waves to foam had torn it,
And to mud had quite reduced it,
While the fishes fled before it.
Thus was hushed the sound of warfare,
Thus was lost the news of battle.

THE BLUE BIRD¹ (I.).

SIURU, bird and Taara's daughter,
Siuru, bird of azure plumage,
With the shining silken feathers,

¹ *Kalevipoeg*, xix. 493-583.

Was not reared by care of father,
Nor the nursing of her mother,
Nor affection of her sisters,
Nor protection of her brothers ;
For the bird was wholly nestless,
Like a swallow needing shelter,
Where her down could grow to feathers
And her wing-plumes could develop ;
Yet did Ukko wisely order,
And the aged Father's wisdom
Gave his daughter wind-like pinions,
Wings of wind and cloudy pinions,
That his child might float upon them,
Far into the distance soaring.

Siuru, bird and Taara's daughter,
Siuru, bird of azure plumage,
Sailed afar into the distance,
And she winged her way to southward,
Then she turned again to northward,
And above three worlds went sailing.
One of these the world of maidens,
One where dwell the curly-headed,
One the home of prattling children,
Where the little ones are tended.

Siuru bird outspread her pinions,
Wide her silken plumes expanding,
Soaring far aloft to heaven.
To the fortress of the sunlight,
To the lighter halls of moonlight,
To the little gate of copper.

Siuru bird outspread her pinions,

Wide her silken plumes expanding,
Soaring far into the distance,
Till she reached her home at evening ;
And her father asked his daughter,
" Whither have thy pinions borne thee ?
Whither didst thou take thy journey ?
Tell me what thine eyes have witnessed."

Siuru heard and comprehended,
And without alarm she answered,
" Where my pinions have conveyed me,
There I scattered feathers from me ;
Where I sailed above the country,
There I scattered silken feathers ;
Where I shook and flapped my pinions,
From my tail I dropped the feathers :
What I saw with marten keenness,
Might be told in seven narrations,
Or in eight tales be recounted.
Long I flew on path of thunder,
On the roadway of the rainbow,
And the hailstone's toilsome pathway ;
Onwards thus I sailed light-hearted,
Heedless, far into the distance,
And at length three worlds discovered,
One the country of the maidens,
One where dwell the curly-headed,
One the world of prattling children,
Where the little ones are tended ;
There it is they rear the fair ones,
Slender-grown and silky-headed."
" What thou heardest ? speak and tell me ;

What thou sawest, let us hear it."
"What then heard I, sire beloved,
What beheld, O dearest father?
There I heard the sport of maidens,
There I heard their mirth and sadness,
Jesting from the curly-headed,
From the little infants wailing.
Wherefore, said the maidens, jesting,
Do the curly-headed children
Dwell in solitude and lonely,
Living thus apart from nurses?
And they asked in every quarter,
Are no youths in starry regions,
Youths of starry birth or other,
Who might dwell among the maidens,
And amuse the curly-headed?"

Ukko heard her words, and answered,
"Soar away, my dearest daughter,
Steer thy flight again to southward,
Sailing far away till evening,
Turning then unto the northward,
Come before the doors of Ukko,
To the western mother's threshold,
To the northern mother's region;
Seek thou there the youths to woo them,
Youths that may release the maidens."

THE BLUE BIRD (II.).

This totally different ballad is from Neus, *Estnische Volkslieder*, p. 42. Neus quotes Ganander as saying that one of the names of the Finnish Wood-goddess (the spouse of Tapio) is Blue Bird. The present poem is *possibly* a fragment of a creation-myth.

Lo, the bird with azure plumage,
Feathers blue and eyes all lustrous,
Took her flight, and hovered, soaring,
Over forests four in number,
Over four woods in succession ;
One a wood of golden pine-trees,
One a wood of beauteous apples,
One a wood of silver birch-trees,
One a swampy wood of lime-trees.

Lo, the bird with azure plumage,
Feathers blue and eyes all lustrous,
Took her flight, and hovered, soaring,
Over lakelets three in number ;
Three the lakes all close together,
And the first with wine was brimming,
And with ale the second foaming,
And the third with mead was frothing.

Lo, the bird with azure plumage,
Feathers blue and eyes all lustrous,
Took her flight, and hovered, soaring,
Over three fields in succession,
Over three fields close together ;
In the first the oats were growing,
In the second rye was waving,
In the third the wheat was springing.

And the wood of golden pine-trees
Was a wood of youthful striplings,
And the wood of beauteous apples
Was a wood of youthful maidens,
And the wood of silver birch-trees
Was a wood of youthful matrons,
And the swampy wood of lime-trees
Was a wood of men all aged.

And the lake with wine o'erbrimming
Was the lake of youthful striplings,
And the lake with ale up-foaming
Was the lake of youthful matrons,
And the lake where mead was frothing
Was the lake of youthful maidens.

And the field where oats were growing
Was the field of youthful striplings,
And the field where rye was waving
Was the field of youthful matrons,
And the field where wheat was springing
Was the share of youthful maidens.

CHARM AGAINST SNAKE-BITE.¹

THOU beneath the bridge, the smooth wood
Under juniper the rough wood,
Thou the arrow in the willows,
O thou challenged gold-adorned one,
Earthy-coloured, liver-coloured,
Rainy-hued and hazel-coloured,
Firebrand hued and cherry-coloured,
Do not thou in secret bite me,
Nor attack me unsuspecting,
Do not bite me when I heed not.

¹ Kreutzwald and Neus, *Mythische und magische Lieder*, p. 7. Charms of this kind are very common in Finland and Esthonia, and a whole volume has been published by the Finnish Literary Society under the name of *Loitsurunoja*, selections from which have been recently published in "Folklore" by the Hon. John Abercromby.

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I AM indebted to Mr. Sydney Hartland for kindly calling my attention to one or two papers which I might otherwise have overlooked.

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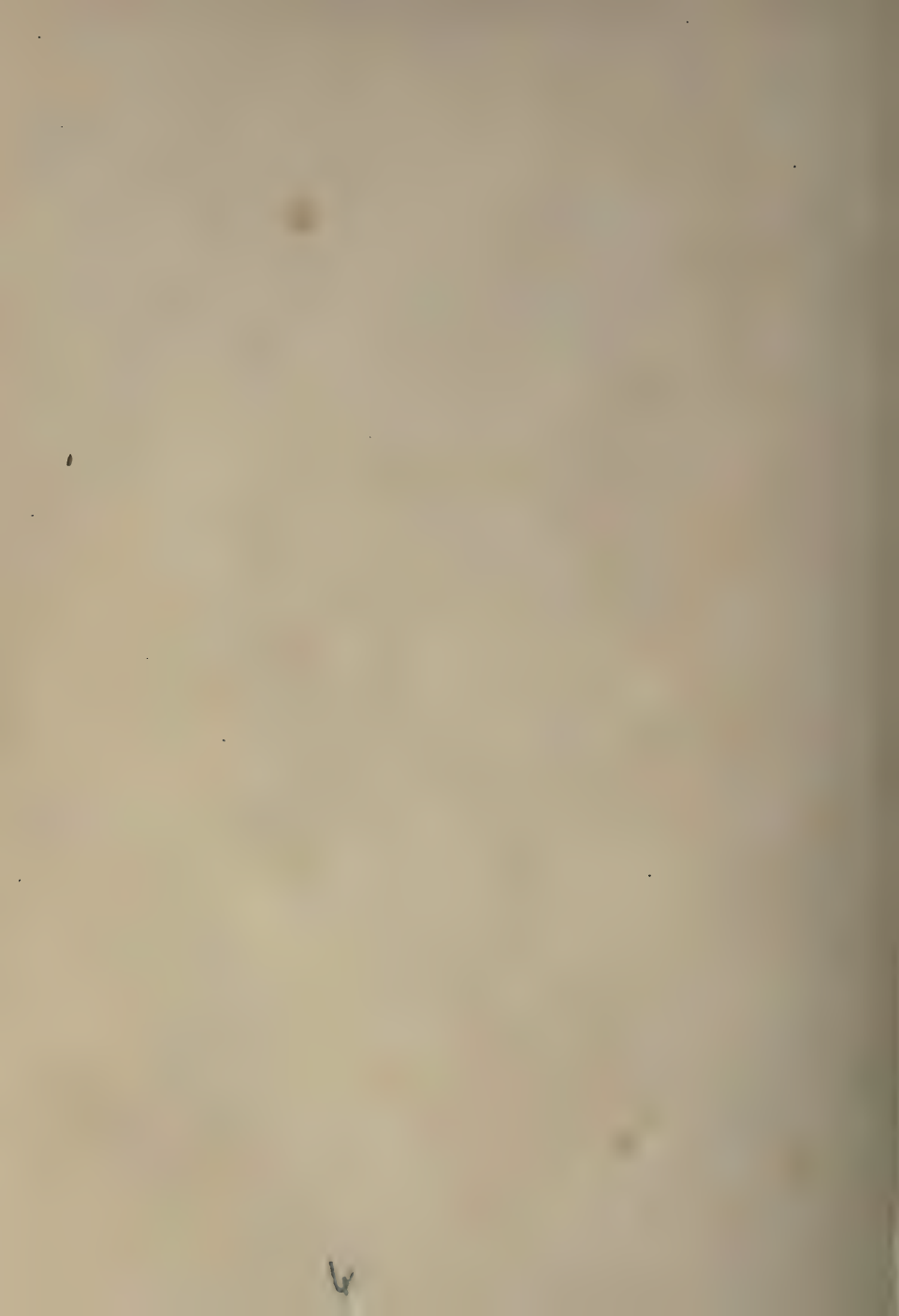
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